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Finance, Budget &
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Wednesday
December 2 1998
Britain's newspaper for Europe

The Guardian EUROPE



G2 with today's European weather



Polly Toynbee's wish list, page 8

Forest cuts

Brazil's baffling decision

France and Germany agree to press ahead with tax harmonisation

Europe: the showdown

German minister calls for end to British veto

Martin Walker in Brussels and Ian Traynor in Potsdam

TONY BLAIR'S moment of truth with Europe arrived last night, as Germany and France steered a collision course with Britain by vowing to continue their campaign for European tax harmonisation.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, who strongly opposes harmonisation, arrived in Brussels for the monthly meeting of European Union finance ministers yesterday hoping to garner support for Britain's position. Instead, he found himself upstaged by Oskar Lafontaine, his German counterpart, who threatened to outflank the British veto with a call for Europe to take decisions by majority vote.

The renewed isolation in Europe which the British government dreads was underlined as French and German leaders issued a joint declaration in Potsdam yesterday for "rapid progress towards tax harmonisation in Europe".

Britain's European choice is becoming stark. On one hand lies a Thatcher-like future of obstinacy and repeated use of the veto; on the other looms a British embrace of the grandiose agenda for an ever more integrated Europe, from taxes to social policy, agreed in Potsdam. There is little room left for Britain to chart a compromise course between these increasingly clear alternatives.

The immediate reaction from Mr Brown, who has repeatedly threatened to use the British veto against EU tax plans, was firmly negative. He was scathing about the idea of Britain losing its veto. "Everybody knows that tax proposals require unanimity, and a change to that requires a treaty change which requires unanimity. And that is simply not going to happen," he said.

The Conservative leader, William Hague, advised the Government to "have no truck with any agenda to have British taxes set in Brussels. Tax competition is healthy. We want to be in Europe, not run by Europe."

Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' Treasury spokesman, said: "Governments must be allowed tax flexibility to match the needs of individual economies."

The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, stressed that he wanted to use his presidency of the EU, starting next month, to reform the Union's institutions as the prerequisite for expanding into eastern Europe. That meant a smaller European Commission and the introduction of majority voting, doing away with national vetoes.

The joint German-French declaration said: "We will campaign for stronger co-ordination in economic policy, particularly in the framework of the 11 euro-countries, for rapid progress in harmonisation of taxes, and for the formation of a real European social model."

Jacques Chirac, the French president, Lionel Jospin, the prime minister, and Mr Schröder described the Franco-German relationship as "more important than ever as the engine of Europe's construction".

From Potsdam the two finance ministers, Mr Lafontaine and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, flew to Brussels to ambush Mr Brown with the joint proposal for an end to national vetoes.

Mr Lafontaine said: "It is clear that as the Union enlarges, we cannot discuss details every time under the principle of unanimity."

This was precisely not what Mr Brown wanted to hear yesterday. Battling against what he described as "a pack of scare stories" in the Eurosceptic British press, Mr Brown said he was "winning the argument that the way forward for Europe is through economic reform and not tax harmonisation".

At the same time, Britain approved a proposal from the Commission that would make Mr Lafontaine the prime spokesman for the new single currency at G7 meetings for the whole of next year. He will speak for the euro during the German presidency, which runs from January until July; and when it passes to Finland, Mr Lafontaine will continue as main euro spokesman until the following year, when France takes over.

The Franco-German accord, and their firm agreement on tax harmonisation, undermined British hopes of using the political relationship with the new German Social Democratic government to make a third member of the traditional Franco-German alliance.

Despite clashes on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the future of nuclear energy, the underlying commitment of France and Germany to their common strategy appears strong, and likely to continue once they are inside the euro zone after January, where British vetoes will lose their force.

UK Treasury officials were alarmed by the Franco-German suggestion that with Britain outside the euro zone, they could go ahead with tax and other harmonisation measures as they pleased. This could complicate British hopes of joining the euro in future. By the time Britain is ready, a harmonised European tax system could be a reality, and accepting it could become a condition of joining the euro.

Reports, pages 4; Leader comment, page 9



Moot point . . . Germany's Oskar Lafontaine issued threat to outflank British veto PHOTOGRAPH: HERMANN KNIPPERTZ

veto n. (*pl.* ~es), & *v.t.* 1. n. Constitutional right of sovereign, president, governor, upper house of legislature, etc., to reject a legislative enactment

'I believe the unanimity rule cannot be maintained. It is clear that as the Union enlarges, we cannot discuss details every time under the principle of unanimity'

Oskar Lafontaine, German finance minister

'Oskar said that? Well Oskar's wrong. The idea that we'd give up the veto is the most ludicrous thing I've heard this week. And it's been a helluva week'

British government spokesman, Brussels

'Everybody knows that tax proposals require unanimity, and a change to that requires a treaty change which requires unanimity. And that is simply not going to happen'

Gordon Brown

'We will campaign for stronger co-ordination in economic policy, particularly in the framework of the 11 euro-countries, for rapid progress in harmonisation of taxes, and for the formation of a real European social model'

French-German joint declaration

Nice to see you, to see you, nice? The general moves in

Nick Hopkins

GENERAL Augusto Pinochet finally moved out of a private psychiatric clinic last night, and headed to a seven bedroom house on an exclusive estate in Surrey.

The general, ordered from Grovelands Priory after the hospital accused him of outstaying his welcome, was heckled by a dozen protesters as he sped through the gates in an ambulance flanked by police cars, and headed towards Virginia Water, where his neighbours will include comedian Bruce Forsyth.

The general, who is wanted in Spain on charges of genocide, terrorism and torture, said he was "distressed" to learn that the hospital in Southgate, north London, no longer wanted him. Lawyers for the 83-year-old said he had been "anxious to move as soon as possible" and blamed bureaucracy for delaying his departure.

The hospital admitted it was "extremely relieved" that the general had gone.

His entourage — including a personal assistant, security guards and a private doctor — had been living at Grovelands since October 29.

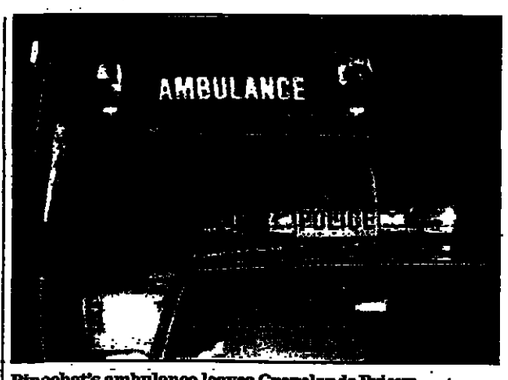
"We are a hospital, not a bed and breakfast," said a source.

A police helicopter circled over the exclusive Wentworth estate in Virginia Water, Surrey, as the general's entourage approached.

Police Commander Carl Crathern said last night: "I can confirm that General Pinochet is now in residence in a house on the Wentworth estate." He would not discuss what security arrangements had been made.

The estate has one of the highest concentrations of millionaire residents in the country. But it seems unlikely that the general will be bumping into neighbours Forsyth and Russ Abbott during what could be a lengthy sojourn. The house earmarked for the Chilean has a long secluded driveway and is surrounded by high walls.

He might, however, catch a glimpse of Forsyth, a keen golfer, on the famous Wentworth course, which adjoins the property.



Pinochet's ambulance leaves Grovelands Priory

Neighbours

The rich and famous who have lived on the Wentworth Estate include . . .

- The Duchess of York
- Television presenter Bruce Forsyth
- Comedian Russ Abbott
- Golfers Sandy Lyle and Sam Torrance
- Radio presenter Terry Wogan
- Television personality Michael Parkinson
- Singers David Essex, Elton John and Rod Stewart have homes nearby

Hiring the house will probably cost the Chilean government a small fortune. The Duchess of York rented a similar property for £6,000 a month following her divorce.

The general's near neighbours seemed underwhelmed at the prospect of his arrival.

"It's a bit like being told Adolf Hitler is moving into the house next door," said one. "There are supposed to be Russian underworld figures and members of the Hong Kong triads living around us on the estate, so a former Chilean dictator who is supposed to be responsible for the disappearance of hundreds of his own people is not exactly big news."

The general is expected to remain at his new address until the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, decides whether extradition proceedings to send him to Spain should go ahead, or whether he should be sent home. That announcement is due on December 11. If the judgment goes against him, he could spend months in Britain embroiled in a lengthy extradition battle.

Letters, Mark Steel, page 9

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Dubai D 8.50	Kenya KSH 150	Portugal E 280	USA US$ 3.00

UK news

Italian meat producers lose their appeal to ban supermarket chain from slicing and packing Parma ham

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International

American gun clubs went to court for the right to bear arms as a teenager was accused of shooting dead five family members.

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Our e-mail address for editorial comments is geurope@guardian.co.uk

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Sketch

Number is up for Labour loyalists



Simon Hoggart

THERE is an old tale about a lunatic asylum where the patients have heard their favourite jokes so often that can they recognise them by number. "Fifteen!" says the head nurse and the patients fall about laughing. "Number 57!" says someone else and they are rolling around in stitches.

A visitor asks if he can try. "31!" he shouts, and is met by silence. "They laughed at you, why not me?" he asks.

"Ah," says the nurse, "it's the way you tell 'em."

I was reminded of a bin by the Commons yesterday, not for the first time. It was the last day's debate on the Queen's Speech, with the economy the main topic. Francis Maude, the shadow chancellor, has been an ungainly, uncertain performer in the past and clearly the Government had high hopes of another Tory debacle.

But with this lot, nothing can be left to chance or ability. So the Labour whips provided their loyal satraps with a list of 10 numbered questions designed to floor Mr Maude. All dutiful backbenchers had to do was to stand up, wait until he gave way, and then read out a pre-digested question. It would be as genuine as those double entendres on Blind Date. ("Number 3, if I were a plumber would you let me clean round your U-bend?")

The trouble was that — as so often happens — whoever had the job of copying the questions and dishing them out had left the original in the photocopier. A passing Tory realised what he had found and ran off umpteen more copies to distribute around the House, each with the message on top: "Labour's proposed intervention on Francis — recovered from a photocopier. Tee hee!" (I like the Bunterish tone of the last two words. You can imagine the finder going off to the tea room for a plateful of cream cakes to celebrate.)

So by the time Mr Maude got up almost everyone in the House, including the Speaker, had copies of these spontaneous interventions.

First up to intervene was a Tory, Howard Flight. He thanked the Government for making sure that the Opposition had the list of questions. He offered to help by asking at least one himself. "Can I begin by asking the shadow chancellor why he is opposed to the extra £40 billion of public spending?"

Mr Maude was especially grateful for this because it gave him a chance to avoid answering the question. (What Labour would like the Tories to do is to say: "Yes, we would cut spending so that old ladies are abandoned on trollies while their grandchildren leave school at the age of 13, unable to read or even to tie their laces." But they are too canny to do this.)

A Labour MP, Geraint Davies, stepped smartly into the trap. The shadow chancellor had given two different views on whether the Bank of England should be allowed to set interest rates. Which was his real opinion?

This question bore a strange resemblance to the paragraph at the end of the crib sheet: "Given the complete confusion in his party . . . will he tell the House once and for all, will he scrap Bank of England independence?"

Delighted Tories shouted: "Number 10! Number 10!"

Dale Campbell-Savours decided to save everyone's time. He stood up and asked for an answer "to Number 8 on the list. And he can't say he doesn't know because he's been given notice".

That was ironic, but some Labour backbenchers wouldn't recognise irony if he came up, cocked a leg, and peed on their shoes. Helen Southworth of Warrington inquired whether Mr Maude remembered the time when, under the Tories, inflation had reached 15 per cent? Tories had recognised Number 3, so they shouted: "Three, three!" like a treeful of starlings spotting a cat.

Derek Twigg even had another go at asking Number 2 again, but it was too late. For once in his parliamentary life, Mr Maude had won.

Third biggest fall on record as recession fears grow ☐ Survey shows manufacturing orders drying up

Shares hit by £35bn crash

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

SHARE prices plunged yesterday as a fresh wave of job losses in industry and signs of a slowdown in the services sector finally alerted City dealers to the risk of the economy sliding into recession.

As £35 billion pounds was wiped off share values, the FTSE 100 Index followed Monday's 100 point drop with a fall of 206.4 points — the third biggest on record and the largest since October 1992.

Following heavy overnight losses on the stock exchanges in New York and Tokyo, the London market saw its recent rally brought to an abrupt end by a survey showing order books drying up in manufacturing and a warning from the CBI that consumers are starting to rein in spending.

The Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply said industry was contracting at its fastest rate since it started its monthly survey seven years ago. "The trend is showing no sign of picking up," said Peter Thomson, its director-general. "Export orders are slightly less awful than last month. What is really depressing is that domestic demand is so weak."

The Bank of England said last month that economic surveys were a key factor in decisions on interest rates, and the pessimistic tone of yesterday's data from both manufacturing and services prompted speculation that the cost of borrowing might be cut for the third successive month when the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee meets next week.

Textiles giant Courtaulds reflected the downbeat mood when it announced the loss of 1,220 jobs yesterday. In addition, the United Glass plant in St Helens, Merseyside, is to close with the loss of another 450 jobs.

With the Conservatives stepping up their attacks on the Government's handling of the economy, the CBI reported that firms in consumer, business and professional services expected growth to slow over the winter.

It said that firms such as accountants, advertisers, computer and law companies, hotels, restaurants, bars and travel agencies were starting to feel the impact of economic slowdown.

"This snapshot shows that weakening confidence among firms in the other sectors of the economy is now shared by those in the consumer, business and professional services," said Sudhir Junankar, the CBI's associate director of economic analysis.

"Although these sectors have seen an increase in the amount of business they do, those reliant on ordinary consumers are not expecting this to continue."

Stock markets have soared since the start of October amid optimism that lower interest rates will underpin robust growth next year. However, some analysts have been warning that the valuations put on shares now bear little relation to corporate earnings in a period of retrenchment.

"Stock markets are coming back to reality," said James Mckay at Commonwealth Bank of Australia. He added that the correction on Wall Street, which fell by more than 200 points on Monday, was long overdue, after "irrational exuberance" recently powered the US market to record highs.

Although consumer spending has held up in Britain despite higher interest rates, Britain's biggest mortgage lender reports today that the economic slowdown has started to affect the housing market. House prices fell by 0.6 per cent in November. The Halifax's survey showed that the annual rate of house price inflation declined from 6.7 per cent to 4.9 per cent.

A similar report, published by the Nationwide Building Society earlier this week, showed the same underlying picture of a downturn in the housing market.

City notebook, page 11

Official: Joel, 10, becomes Joella after lifelong fight for new birth certificate



Joella Holliday yesterday with her mother, Julia Farmer, who said: 'We have never thought of Joella being any different' PHOTOGRAPH: GEOFF ROBINSON

Stuart Millar

A CHILD who was registered as a boy but who has grown up as a girl has won a nine-year battle to change her birth certificate.

Joella Holliday, aged 10, was born with a rare medical condition which caused horrific disfigurements to the lower body, making it difficult for doctors to determine the gender. With the child not expected to survive, he was christened Joel David within hours of birth and registered as a boy because he had male chromosomes.

But on his first birthday, Joel became Joella after doctors advised that as he lacked male sex organs, he would have a better life if raised as a girl. Five months later, Joella underwent the first of a series of operations to become female.

Her mother, Julia Farmer, applied to the Registrar General for a new birth certificate as soon as the child left hospital, but the application was refused.

It was not until the Office of National Statistics was presented with 47 pages of evidence from a Great Ormond Street specialist explaining Joella's condition that it accepted a medical mistake had been made when the child was registered as a boy.

The ONS has now taken the unusual step of agreeing to issue a new birth certificate, and the family plans to have Joella rechristened next month in her village church in Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire.

Mrs Farmer, aged 30, said yesterday: "It's just so strange that it's all over, I can't believe it's been nine years and now we can get on with being normal. We have never thought of Joella being any different. It was our persistence that won out. The question always was, if the operation was legal, why was it not legal for her to be who she was?

"She shouldn't have been put in the same category as a transsexual. She was only a child born in a real mess."

Joella, who is receiving hormone treatment, has undergone dozens of operations for her condition, called *exomphalius ectopia vesicae* and hemi-bladder. It meant that the child's bladder and intestines were outside the body, there was no abdominal wall and there was an unformed phallus in two parts.

She does not have a uterus and will require further surgery to overcome her internal problems. Otherwise, she is a normal little girl, says her mother. "She likes loud music, boys and shopping. There's nothing different about her at all."

Charles Brook, the professor of endocrinology at Great Ormond Street who supported Joella's case, said: "It seems no one understood the nature of Joella's complaint. It had not been explained properly to the relevant authorities and so they got it muddled up with transsexuals and all that rubbish. Joella had an embryological abnormality and was inappropriately assigned to the male sex when she was born and now she's been correctly assigned. It's taken the Registrar General a bit of time to catch up."

In the course of her campaign, Mrs Farmer tracked down the Rev John Read, the hospital chaplain who performed the first christening. "It's nice to know that she is being christened again. It's a new start," he said.

As for Joella, she said: "It's really good. I can look forward to getting married."

Review

If only it would stop, but it didn't

Lyn Gardner

Killing Rasputin
Bridewell Theatre, London

UNTIL now, the only musical claim to fame for the mad monk whose influence was to have such catastrophic consequences for the last tsar of Russia and his family was in a hit song by seventies popsters Boney M.

This musical by James McConnel, Kit Hesketh-Harvey and Stephen Clark boasts nothing in its two hours that is as catchy. The score is melodic without being memorable, the lyrics lack focus, and if you believe the plot, billed as a true story, you probably believe Disney's Anastasia.

This is history with a romantic Hollywood sheen, in which the great sweep of the Russian revolution takes place with never a mention of Marxism, and in which love, not Lenin, is the driving force.

It is 1915. The tsar's niece, Princess Irina, is betrothed to her cousin Prince Dmitri. But on the night before he is due to go to the front, he takes her to a dubious dive where he meets a cross-dressing nightclub singer who seduces him. The singer turns out to be Prince Yusupov, who has also been having an affair with Rasputin, the tsarina's favourite, and the only one who can stop the bleeding of the haemophiliac tsarevitch.

When Rasputin betrays him, leaving him with a gaggle of gypsies who beat him up, Yusupov, full of self-disgust, is transformed from decadent deviant to the Mother Teresa of the Russian front in a twinkle, turning his palace into a hospital for wounded soldiers and falling in love with Irina.

Thus transformed from object of derision to hero, Yusupov sets about ridding Russia of Rasputin. There is a lot more angst-ridden wailing and light S&M to be endured before Rasputin accepts the poisoned chalice of a night of love with Irina and gets it in the back.

It takes either exceptional self-confidence or a certain foolhardiness to begin the second half of an already dodgy evening with a song entitled If Only It Would Stop. Unfortunately it doesn't.

Ian Brown's extremely well acted production treats the risible material with much more gravitas than it deserves.

This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

Tatchell fined 'derisory' £18.60 for pulpit protest

Will Woodward

GAY RIGHTS activist Peter Tatchell was yesterday fined £18.60 for a "puerile" protest from the pulpit during the Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter sermon.

The reason for the precise amount of the fine was not stated, but it happens to chime with the 1860 Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act, the little-known law which Tatchell was found guilty of breaking. Canterbury stipendiary magistrate Michael Kelly also ordered him to pay £320 costs.

Tatchell was the first person in 31 years to be successfully prosecuted under the act, which forbids "riotous, violent or indecent behaviour in any cathedral church".

The defence case yesterday included a claim that, under the act, Jesus would have been liable to prosecution for overturning the money changers' table.

But Mr Kelly told Tatchell, who pleaded not guilty: "Your conduct violated the rights of worshippers on one of the most important days in the Christian calendar."

The court heard that Tatchell, aged 46, and six other activists from gay rights group OutRage! climbed into the pulpit during Dr George Carey's sermon at Canterbury Cathedral. Before being removed, Tatchell delivered a short speech criticising the archbishop's opposition to gay fostering and an equal age of consent.

Mr Kelly told him: "I am sure that some people would have been disgusted and deeply offended by your conduct. I suspect that the vast majority would regard your conduct as an insignificant and transient incident in the history of a great cathedral.

"I agree with your counsel when he said that the Church of England is a robust institution and I have no doubt that in spite of the publicity here your puerile conduct will soon be forgotten, although your cause may not be."

Mr Kelly told Tatchell he was "a man of previous good character" with "a clear commitment to your cause and a belief in non-violent protest".

In 1967, the last time a conviction was achieved under the act, two anti-Vietnam war protesters were jailed for two months, the maximum penalty, for interrupting a lesson read by Harold Wilson at a Methodist service during the 1966 Labour conference.

Labour MP Tony Benn and Liberal Democrat MP Evan Harris gave character statements supporting Tatchell. Mr Benn said the activist had never urged anyone to break the law. "But I must say to the court that I believe conscience lies above the law because conscience is God-made and the law is man-made."

Outside the court, Tatchell said: "I have been found guilty but I don't feel guilty. I stood up for human rights and would do it again.

"The fact that the court has given a derisory fine of £18.60 indicates that the magistrate himself does not regard it as a serious offence.

"It is Dr Carey who supports discrimination — it is I who supports equality. He is the guilty person. He is the person who supported the abuse of human rights."

In a statement, Lambeth Palace said Dr Carey was committed to a "continuing dialogue with homosexuals". He "had no role in the prosecution of Mr Tatchell and did not seek one".



Tatchell's 'puerile conduct will soon be forgotten'

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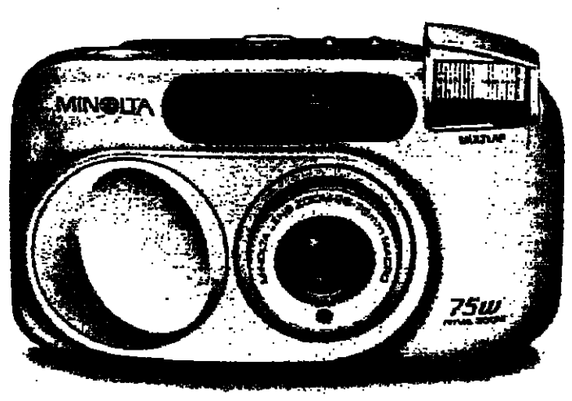
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Turner Prize goes to Ofili



The boy dung good . . . Turner Prize judges praised the originality, energy and complexity of Chris Ofili's painting PHOTOGRAPH: EAMONN McCABE

At last, a painter wins – with a little help from elephant dung and glitter

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

THANKS to a large helping of elephant dung, conceptual art's hold on the Turner Prize was broken last night when Chris Ofili became the first painter to win the £20,000 prize since 1985.

But he is not the sort of painter who would necessarily appease the traditionalists who have made a habit of protesting against the Turner Prize's recent championing of conceptual art. His colourful works include dried, resin-coated elephant dung, glitter and cartoon characters as well as incorporating references to black culture and Renaissance painting. Some even glow in the dark.

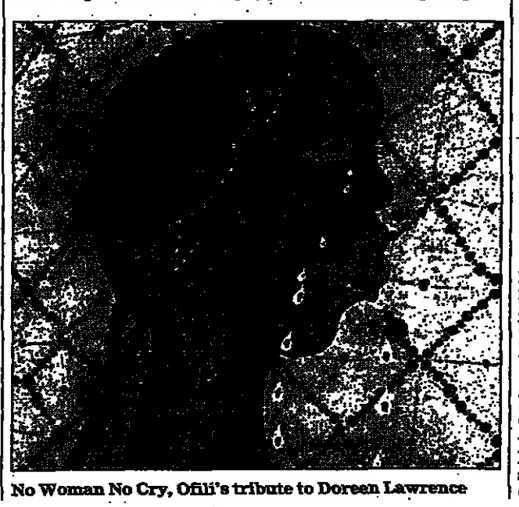
Ofili was the only man and the only painter among the four shortlisted artists. The other artists included a filmmaker, a sculptor and a photographer. The last painter to win the Turner Prize — named after one of Britain's greatest painters — was Howard Hodgkin in 1985. Ofili is the first black artist to win the prize.

Announcing the winner, the judges praised "the originality and energy of his painting, and his dynamic use of colour". They also admired "the complexity of his work, with its multilayered references to contemporary urban culture and awareness of the history of art".

Ofili was the hot favourite with the bookmakers to win this year's prize, with closing odds of 5-4 on. His Turner Prize success caps an astounding year for the young painter, following an acclaimed and highly popular show at the Southampton City Art Gallery which later toured to the Serpentine Gallery in London. It is currently at Manchester City Art Gallery.

His paintings, which veer from the figurative to the abstract, often star a mythical black superhero called Captain Shit, inspired by the Marvel comics. Captain Shit is surrounded in many pictures by cut-outs of figures from black popular culture, from James Brown to Muhammad Ali. But his work is not exclusively about the black experience: pornography and the Bible also get mentions.

"My project is not a PC project," he has said. "It allows you to laugh about issues that are potentially serious. There are no rules, and even the ones you set for yourself can be temporary."



No Woman No Cry, Ofili's tribute to Doreen Lawrence

Ofili is unafraid to incorporate contemporary politics into his work. One painting in the Turner Prize exhibition, No Woman No Cry, is a tribute to the dignity and suffering of Doreen Lawrence, the mother of the murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence. It features teardrops descending from a woman's face. Each tear contains a tiny black and white portrait of Stephen Lawrence.

Ofili was born in Manchester in 1968 and studied fine art at Chelsea School of Art before completing a master's in painting at the Royal College of Art. He was a winner in the Whitworth Young Contemporaries exhibition and has twice been shortlisted for the BP Portrait Award.

Although his work incorporates many elements of popular culture, he insists that it is anything but frivolous. "My work and the way that I work comes out of experimentation, but it also comes out of a love of painting, a love affair with painting."

The elephant dung, which he acquires free of charge from London Zoo, was inspired by a visit to Zimbabwe. He both stands his paintings on the dung and sticks it to the canvas.

The other artists on the shortlist were Tacita Dean, Cathy de Monchaux and Sam Taylor-Wood. The judges were Ann Gallagher from the British Council, the curator and critic Fumio Nanjo, the collector and Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant, the author Marina Warner, and Tate director Nicholas Serota. Ofili was presented with the prize by the fashion designer and gallery owner Agnès b at the Tate Gallery last night.

Review

Adrian Searle

CHRIS OFILI has proved popular with a black audience which, it is often assumed, feels alienated by contemporary art. Ofili is truly popular, and also highly respected, among artists.

His paintings are marked by a broad range of influences and borrowings — from Yoruba and Australian Aboriginal dot paintings; from 1970s black funk style; from the collaged collisions and drooling resin layerings of German artist Sigmar Polke; from the elephants at London, Whipsnade and Berlin zoos whose dung is Ofili's calling-card. Its use is itself a borrowing from black American artist David Hammons.

Ofili's originality lies in his joyous orchestration of these disparate elements. His cartoon superhero, Captain Shit, painted in parody of 1970s "blaxploitation" movies, and of the sharply dressed gangsta heroes of rap music, actually glows in the dark.

Troubling for some audiences has been Ofili's paintings of a Black Virgin, whom he paints surrounded by collaged-on body parts snipped from pornographic magazines.

The Black Virgin has a venerable place in Catholic iconography, and the sexuality of the Virgin has been a consistent, if often covert, theme of European religious painting since the Renaissance.

Ofili's paintings are often humourous and always visually complex, entertaining and arresting. His work has a more serious purpose than to shock.

With his wraparound glasses and lime green Ford Capri, he plays up the stereotype of the bad-ass black artist. But unlike an earlier generation of black artists in Britain, he is not interested in the polemics of political correctness, preferring beguilement and a self-consciously over-the-top exoticism to outright political statement.

Never the less, his painting No Woman No Cry (the title of which is taken from the Bob Marley song) in the Turner Prize show is a portrait of a woman shedding tears, and in each tear is a tiny portrait of black murder victim Stephen Lawrence.

The painting is dedicated to Lawrence's mother. The words "No Woman No Cry" are picked-out in coloured pins stuck into the balls of dung at the painting's feet.

The Tate put a reserve on the painting some weeks ago. Chris Ofili truly deserves the prize.

Big increase in out-patient waiting lists

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

THE number of people having to wait more than six months to see a hospital specialist, a breach of the Patient's Charter, has soared almost 16 per cent in three months.

The rise will lend support to claims that the Government is cutting waiting lists for operations — in pursuit of its pre-election promise to reduce them by 100,000 — only by allowing backlogs to build up elsewhere.

Figures due out today are expected to show that in-patient waiting lists in England fell in October for the sixth successive month and now stand at their lowest since June last year.

However, out-patient statistics show that 126,000 people have been waiting more than 26 weeks for a first appointment with a specialist. As many as 437,000 have been waiting more than 13 weeks. Both figures, for the end of September, are up 15.6 per cent on those for the end of June.

Under the charter, which the Government is to replace, "everyone can expect to be seen within 26 weeks" — a standard described when it was set in 1995 as an initial target to be tightened further.

The increase in out-patient waiting times was last night described as "deeply worrying" by Claire Rayner, who chairs the Patients Association pressure group.

"I have said from the beginning that I don't give a damn about the length of the waiting list. What I do care about, and what patients care about, is the length of waiting time," she said.

"On this basis, it looks as if some places are massaging their figures, bunching people waiting to get into out-patients, because once they are there they are going to swell the waiting list for surgery."

Anthony Harrison, fellow in health policy analysis at the King's Fund research institute, said the rise in out-patient waits was a predictable consequence of the drive to cut in-patient lists. But it was due to a behavioural reaction, rather than any "fiddling" of figures.

"Putting pressure on at the treatment stage was always going to squeeze the system further back, even if only in the sense that surgeons doing more operations are doing less in out-patients," Mr Harrison said.

According to the Department of Health, the problem stems from a sudden, unexplained increase in the number of patients being referred to specialists. When self-referrals and referrals by other specialists are taken into account, 65,000 more out-patients were seen in the quarter to the end of September than in the equivalent period last year.

A department spokesman said: "There is no question of any slowdown in the number of patients seen."

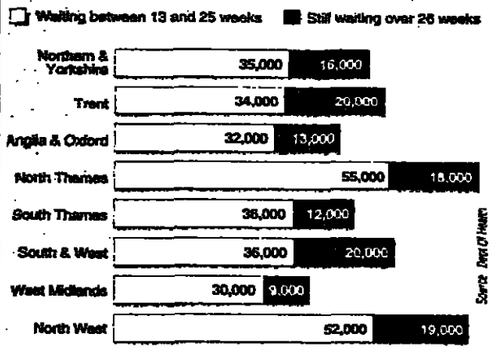
However, compared with a year ago, fewer out-patients (1.9 million) were seen in the September quarter after written referral by their GP.

Today's provisional in-patient figures are expected to show that the total waiting list for treatment fell below 1.2 million in October. Ministers are committed to cutting it to below 1.1 million.

Paul Burstow, Liberal Democrat social services spokesman, said: "Judging by their own figures, the Government is in danger of spending so much money on tackling waiting lists that waiting times will go through the roof."

Waiting lists

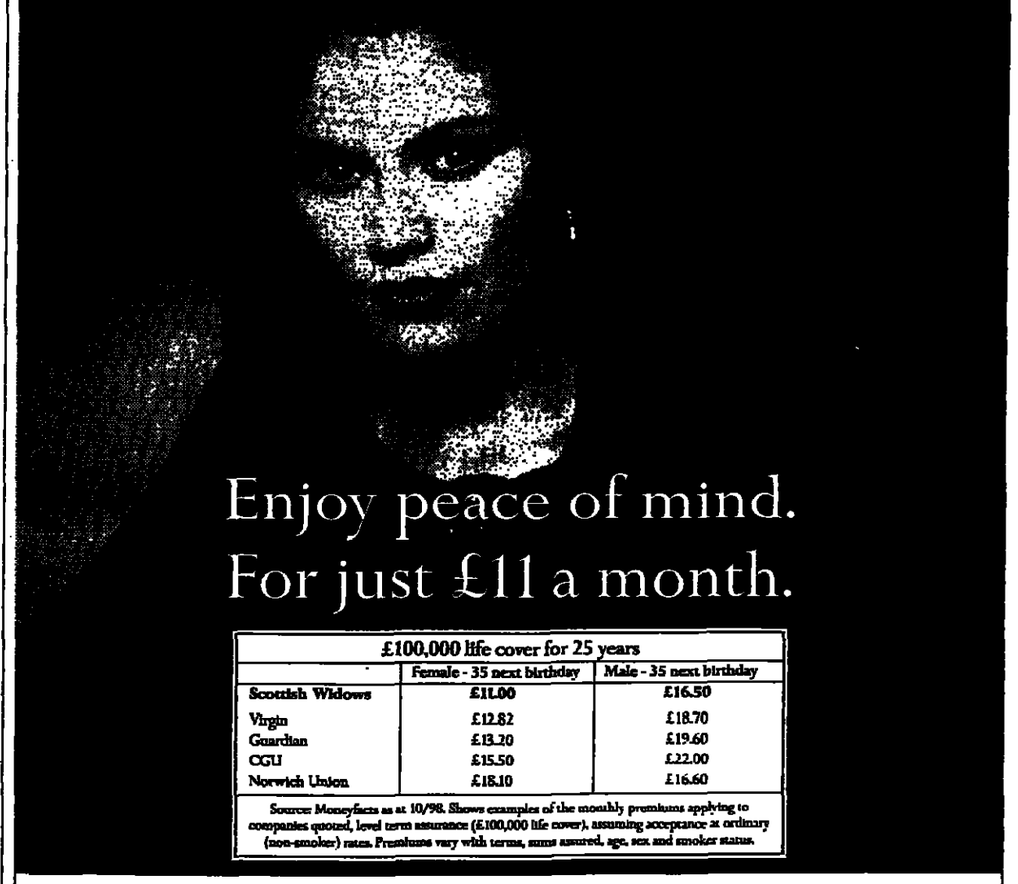
Number of patients still waiting to be seen following a GP-written referral, September 30 1998





'I don't give a damn about the length of the waiting list. What I care about is the length of waiting time'
Claire Rayner

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People are coming round to Wogan because, with no disrespect to his skills, the alternatives are so much worse. As he was making gentle sport with listeners who had responded to his request for a catchphrase one morning, the team on the Chris Evans show were talking about "whacking off" and getting drunk on moonshine jelly.

Portrait, G2 page 4

The UK will not be one of the nations launching the euro, but many fear the Government will join soon

Push to harmonise taxes in Europe

Tax harmonisation

	UK position	Speculation	Fact	Likely outcome
VAT	Exemption/lower rates on some items	End to exemption/ lower rates	EC* wants harmonisation	Eventual harmonisation
Energy	Existing carbon tax	Green regime	EC wants harmonisation	Eventual energy tax
Excise duty	Some higher rates	EC wants harmonisation	EC wants harmonisation	No harmonisation in foreseeable future
Corporate tax	Among lowest rates in EU	EU to force higher rates	Germany seeking harmonisation	Unlikely in face of UK veto
Income tax	Relatively low rates	Rates to rise	Germany hinting at harmonisation	Non runner even without UK veto
Savings	Withholds tax but Eurobond exemption	20% flat rate	UK fighting to keep exemption	Flat rate. UK opt-out for Eurobond market
Duty free	To go in 1999	Temporary reprieve	UK joining calls to postpone abolition	To go
Tax breaks	85 up for discussion includes 10 in UK, for example...			
Film industry	More tax relief on capital spending	To go	Under discussion	To go

*EC: European Commission



A Dover-Calais ferry laden with cheap booze. Harmonising excise taxes would bring some UK rates down, not least on alcohol and petrol

Proposals could spell the end of Britain's VAT exemptions

Mark Milner
Deputy Financial Editor

THE Euro-taxman cometh, we are told, threatening everything including VAT exemptions on children's clothes, Britain's status as a favoured destination for inward investment and the jobs of young men in striped suits and highly coloured braces in the City of London's bond markets.

Anyone reading some recent reports could be forgiven for thinking that Brussels has launched an all-out assault to revamp Britain's tax system according to an EU-wide bureaucratic blueprint.

So what is really going on? The answer is that there are two separate strands to the furore over tax: one domestic, one European.

Take the domestic issue first. In a month's time, 11 European countries will launch the euro, the single European currency. One big consequence is that from January 1, 1999, interest rates in the so-called euro-zone will be set by central bankers sitting at the top of a tower block in Frankfurt, the financial capital of Germany.

The UK will not be among the 11 nations launching the euro, but there are many Eurosceptics in Britain who fear that sooner rather than later the Government will join — despite the Blair administration's assertions that Britain will seek membership only if monetary union meets five economic criteria and if Parliament and people, via a referendum, agree.

They fear that handing over the conduct of monetary policy — setting interest rates — to the central bankers in Frankfurt means a huge surrender of sovereignty: allowing decisions which are vital to Britain which are currently taken in Britain to be taken elsewhere.

More immediately, they are concerned that although the Government has laid down conditions for signing up for monetary union it is pushing the idea that membership is both desirable and inevitable. Now, however, they believe the European Commission's

> Britain, with a veto on tax change, is not as vulnerable as sceptics claim

single market commissioner, Mario Monti, and the German finance director, Oskar Lafontaine, have handed them the means to derail an apparently seamless run towards euro membership: tax.

In broad terms the tax debate can be summed up in one word, harmonisation — in crude terms, bringing UK tax rates into line with those elsewhere in Europe. Mr Monti, for example, is keen to harmonise VAT, energy and excise duties. Mr Lafontaine wants to bring corporate taxes into line, to introduce a Europe-wide withholding tax — tax deducted at source — on savings, and is reported to have added income tax to his wish list.

Eurosceptics have been quick to pounce, arguing that VAT harmonisation will mean, among other things, dearer food and children's clothes, that withholding tax will hit trading in Eurobonds, centred in the City, with the loss of jobs and earnings. Harmonising corporate taxes will mean higher UK taxes, removing a competitive edge in the battle to lure inward investment, and a further surrender of sovereignty. And what could be more potent a weapon in the anti-euro propaganda battle than the thought of higher income tax?

It is not just a question of the UK against the rest. The debate embraces the idea of ending some 85 tax breaks, only 10 of which are in operation in the UK.

Nor is it a one-way street. Harmonising excise taxes, for example, would bring some UK rates down, not least on alcohol and petrol.

Nor is Britain as vulnerable to Brussels/Bonn schemes as the Eurosceptics would suggest. EU rules mean that Britain has a veto on tax changes. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, has been quick to insist that fiscal policy is a matter for him, not his counterparts in Europe.

But why are the Europeans suddenly trying to push the tax agenda forward? To an extent they are only carrying on a existing trend. Brussels has been trying to harmonise some tax rates for years.

The argument is that different rates of tax may "distort" decision making, persuading people to make different choices from those they would have made if tax rates had been equal.

For Mr Monti a level tax playing field in areas like excise duty and VAT will make the single market work better.

Mr Lafontaine's intervention is somewhat different. He is widely tagged as a "tax and spend" finance minister, but his two key concerns are more than Old Labour with a German accent.

Germany is worried that low rates of corporation tax in places like Ireland and Belgium, rather more than the United Kingdom, put it at a disadvantage. It wants a Euro-wide withholding tax to stop German savers from sticking their cash into offshore accounts and dodging the German tax authorities.

Ian Traynor profiles the German minister, dubbed the European from Hell, who is pitching for a level playing field, which would mean the end of tax havens

OSKAR Lafontaine's love affair with France is aesthetic, culinary and political. The German social democratic leader and finance minister speaks fluent French.

His offices in Bonn serve the best French food and wine available in the city beyond the confines of the French ambassador's sumptuous residence. He is a fan of the French elite's dirigiste manner of conducting affairs.

And yesterday his Francophilia received another boost when a summit of the French and German governments in Potsdam — Mr Lafontaine's first formal summit with the French — agreed to strengthen ties by siting a Franco-German university in Saarbruecken, Mr Lafontaine's home town on the French border.

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and his main adviser, Bodo Hombach, both on the right of the SPD, may harbour ambitions to upgrade Germany's relations with Britain, inevitably at the expense of the traditionally close ties with France. But Mr Lafontaine is having none of it.

For the past three years France and Germany have been fighting fiercely over the rules for running the single European currency — known as the stability pact — the powers of the European central bank, and the relationship between monetary, fiscal and economic policymaking.

Suddenly the row is over since Mr Lafontaine espouses the French position, bashing the central bankers, calling for co-ordination of monetary and economic policy, and augmenting the stability pact with a European "jobs pact" which turns employment and economic growth into paramount goals of the EU parallel to the central bank's task of ensuring monetary stability and low inflation. Mr Lafontaine, 55, married to the economist Christa Müller with whom he co-authored a recent book on globalisation and who has been generating negative headlines in Germany because of her alleged influence on the finance minister, has erupted on to the German national and European political stages since the SPD election triumph in September.

He has quickly become the European from Hell for the British tabloid and Eurosceptic media because, uniquely among a Schröder administration that appears indecisive and unprepared for power, he knows what he wants, how to go about getting it, and relishes the rows and controversies he inspires.

He picked a fight over interest rates with the German central bank — not usually advisable in Germany. But his real target is the European central bank which will be running the single currency from January.

He has also sparked a row through his advocacy of "harmonised taxes" on companies and on interest earnings across the European Union.

All the dynamism and substance visible from the government ranks over the past month have been initiated by Mr Lafontaine.

He beefed up his own portfolio powers at the expense of the economics ministry by insisting on being given the latter's responsibility for European economic policy making.

Armed with these new powers, he promptly began laying out his vision of "a more social Europe", reflected in yesterday's Franco-German call for "progress also in the social dimension of European unification."

> He picked a fight over interest rates — but his real target is the European central bank

Ultimately, he wants a level playing field across the European Union or the single currency zone which eradicates competitive advantages in fiscal, investment, and wages policy for member states. That means tax havens like the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and Luxemburg, have to go.

It also means, in stark contrast to the government of Helmut Kohl which wanted to keep employment policy under national remit, Europe-wide macro-economic policies aimed at creating jobs and triggering growth.

All the signs are that Mr Lafontaine will embark seriously on his agenda with the launch of the euro next month as it coincides with Germany's EU presidency.

German candour on tax plans upsets Blair

Latest move in integration drive puts London on defensive



French prime minister Lionel Jospin, French president Jaques Chirac, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schoder at a Potsdam press conference yesterday

Michael White
Political Editor

NOT for the first time in Britain's turbulent post-war relations with its cousins across the Channel, the Government was last night forced on to the defensive as France and Germany raced ahead towards yet another distant Euro-goal.

This time it was tax harmonisation, an ambition restated by Gerhard Schröder and Lionel Jospin at their Potsdam summit, with an added flourish from Germany's finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, that the EU rules should be changed so that unanimity is no longer required among the EU 15 to pursue that goal.

The harmonisation of key tax policies — the next step after next month's arrival of the single currency — is the latest move in the steady drive towards European intergration which has been the hallmark of the Franco-German alliance since Adeneur and de Gaulle buried their countries' ancient enmities with an embrace 40 years ago.

British diplomats insist they have no ambition to damage that alliance, "qualitatively different from all other relations in Europe because of their bad relations in the past", as one put it last night.

It is also the core of EU stability. Whatever friendly overtures Mr Schröder's new centre-left regime makes towards London, Britain has opted to stay out of the single currency and is thus excluded from the Euro-X committee and the Central Bank which will manage and monitor its progress. No amount of Treasury verbiage can disguise the price of self-exclusion. Most British governments have dragged their heels, then joined Europe late on Europe's terms, since the 1950s. Except for its upbeat rhetoric Tony Blair's government is no different.

But it is *trying* to be different. What Mr Blair, Gordon Brown and Robin Cook want to do is weave a network of Euro-alliances on different issues, from tax to skills training, reorganisation of the defence industries and entrepeneurship, defence talks with Italy, employment talks with Spain there is scope for forging pacts and swopping policies.

All the same, for Mr Blair yesterday's tax candour was the kind of embarrassment which John Major routinely suffered and Margaret Thatcher relished.

Contrary to the Prime Minister's cherished hope, to restore Britain's reputation as a constructive but distinctive Euro-player, it created the familiar impression that London is again being sidelined by the Bonn-Paris axis.

Subject to the promised referendum Britain will eventually join the single currency on Europe's terms. That too is a familiar story.

Brown backs 'doomed' effort to delay end of duty-free

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Chancellor Gordon Brown yesterday gave his backing to German efforts to postpone the abolition of duty free sales but warned the move was unlikely to succeed.

The European Union agreed in 1991 to scrap the £1 billion-a-year duty free sales industry next summer, despite warnings of job losses, including up to 20,000 in the UK, and higher fares as ferry companies and airport operators tried to compensate for lost revenue.

But yesterday Mr Brown said: "We have always said that were there an opportunity to look at this again we were prepared to do so. The British Government's position has been consistent. Where there is unanimity we would support it. But I don't want to raise anyone's expectations."

Until the German election campaign this summer, Germany supported abolition and only Ireland was calling for a review. Now Gerhard Schroeder's government has said it would like a review. And French prime minister Lionel Jospin has commissioned one of his MPs, who represents Calais, to conduct a jobs assessment on the effect of abolition.

The European Commission, which still strongly supports abolition in the face of a concerted lobbying campaign by the industry and transport unions, has refused to reopen the issue. Brussels officials claiming that many goods on offer could be bought more cheaply elsewhere.

The Commission argues that duty free is an outdated tax concession which benefits only the minority of citizens who travel abroad, for which those who stay at home have to pay in higher costs. And it says the industry will have had eight years to prepare, pointing out it has spent the time building more shopping malls in terminals instead.

Yesterday's move by the chancellor is widely seen as a shift in stance with officials admitting it is a diversionary tactic. 'We have to have something to give the punters back home. It won't go anywhere," one official said.

Court victory for supermarket chain in 'barmy Parma drama'

Rory Carroll

ITALIAN meat producers yesterday lost a renewed court attempt to ban the Asda supermarket chain from slicing and packing Parma ham in Britain.

The Court of Appeal rejected a complaint from the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, a trade association, that Asda's product was not genuine because it was processed outside the Parma region in the Po Valley.

Asda celebrated by setting up a stall outside the law courts in London with a placard hailing the end of "The Barmy Parma Drama".

The three judges upheld a High Court ruling in January that the chain, which buys from one of the biggest producers in Parma, could use the name Parma ham even though the air-cured meat was sliced and packed by Hygrade Foods Ltd of Corsham, Wiltshire.

An Asda spokesman said it was a victory for the consumer. "Our product is priced at 2.38p per gram, while our competitors sell it at around 3.84p. This action was about us trying to bring down the price of shopping for UK consumers.

"Whether it be in Parma, Pudsey, Plymouth or Perth, with the full backing of today's ruling we will continue to slice and pack our ham wherever we can guarantee to keep prices permanently low."

According to Italian law, the ham must be fully prepared for sale in Parma under the control of the Consorzio, which has police-like powers to enforce the rules.

The Consorzio, which was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords, had argued that it was backed by European Union regulations which protect the designations of origin of agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The judges agreed the regulations made Parma ham a protected designation of origin but did not apply to rules on slicing and packing.

The Italians had claimed that Parma ham's reputation as a delicacy depended on producers' rigorous controls.

Low humidity makes the salt-rich Parma hills ideal for curing. There are 5,600 recognised pig breeders and 220 slaughterers. Laws regulate the type of pigs used, their rearing conditions, diet and slaughtering procedures.

Since the 1980s the Consorzio has launched 300 sets of legal proceedings outside Italy to protect its name.

Yesterday's ruling was just one in a series of wrangles involving food sold under the name of an area. European laws protect the names of certain famous products, including Champagne and cheeses such as Stilton, Swaledale and Single Gloucester.

The same rules have prevented Judy Bell, a Yorkshire farmer, from selling feta cheese, which can apply only to sheep or goat milk churned in Greece. Pending an appeal this month, Mrs Bell has also been stopped from calling her product Yorkshire Fetta or Pheta.

The name Cheddar has become so widely used that the EU says it cannot stop other producers from using it.

Brewers such as Newcastle Brown Ale, Kentish Ale and Rutland Bitter are protected. A French effort to end restrictions on Cornish clotted cream has recently failed.

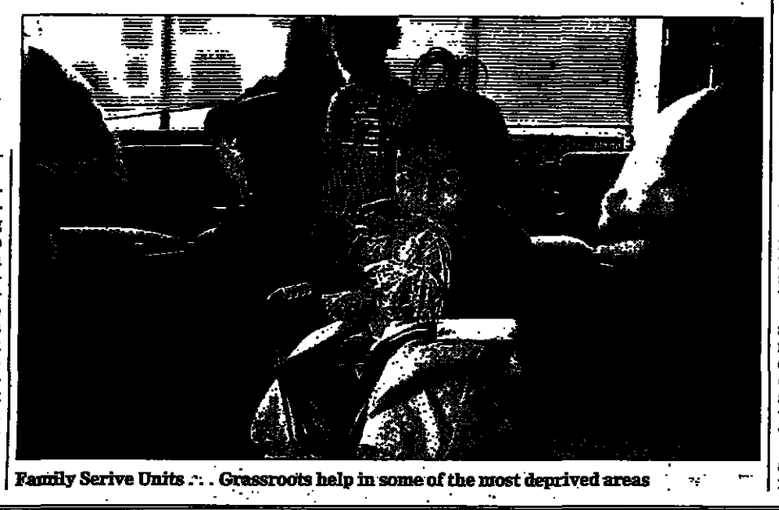
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The Soil Association . . . Has been championing organic farming since 1945



Family Serive Units . . . Grassroots help in some of the most deprived areas

The Guardian Christmas appeal

THE Guardian is launching its first Christmas appeal for charities today, in response to requests from readers.

National surveys show Guardian readers are twice as likely as the average to give donations to charity. Now is your chance to re-affirm the evidence of these surveys, which suggest our readership donates more than £53 million to charity every year.

We have selected three small but growing charities. Each tackles root causes, rather than just applying palliatives to serious problems. They are widely respected within the charity world. We have intentionally selected charities representing quite distinct areas — domestic poverty, overseas aid, and the environment.

We are also giving readers a further option of supporting this year's winners of the Guardian Jerwood award, the leading annual competition for small charities.

Details of each are provided below, and further reports will follow over the next few weeks.

Readers can send in a general donation, which will be distributed among all the charities, or specify the FSU, WaterAid or the Soil Association. Further donation details are on this page.

The charities you will be supporting

Family Service Units

The Family Service Units work to support Britain's poorest families and provides emergency and long term services in some of the country's most deprived inner city areas.

The FSU delivers help at grassroots level — offering support or counselling for people experiencing such difficulties as domestic violence, bullying, or coping with mental health problems or Aids.

Units also work to help young people from deprived families get a good start in life, organising parenting classes, helping with creches, offering pre-school support, and helping disaffected adolescents excluded from school.

They also provide emergency support, offering everything from communal washing machines and telephones, to advisers who can help with benefits claims. "While we recognise that the nature of poverty has changed over the years, its results for families are the same: inequality, lack of opportunity and social exclusion. Very few in our society actually suffer hunger, but poor housing and malnutrition due to poor diet are still prevalent," said Naomi Eisenstadt, the FSU chief executive. The FSU has defied critics by demonstrating that it is possible to prevent family breakdown by offering support to help people survive their problems.

WaterAid

Some 1.4 billion people — a quarter of the world's population — cannot pour themselves a glass of clean water. More than 2 billion do not have access to proper sanitation. And every hour about 600 people die because the available water is contaminated, inadequate or non-existent.

But WaterAid stresses the situation can be radically improved relatively cheaply.

It provides clean, safe drinking water to developing countries. It works with communities, providing them with equipment and skills to build and maintain systems.

But because health improvements do not come from clean water alone, WaterAid also installs effective sanitation systems and tries to improve public hygiene through education programmes.

"The vital, gut-wrenching point is that there are more than a billion people in the world who do not have access to clean water," said John Lane, the director. "In a society where we have found water on the moon, I find that a staggering and totally unacceptable inequality."

Clean water and the health improvements which come with it provide a sound base for future development.

"It forms a vital building block for everything else these people want to do to change their lives." Mr Lane said. "And because the systems are so cost-effective, pounds 10 is enough on average to set up one person with water supplies."

The Soil Association

The association has been championing organic farming in Britain since 1945, and studies the impact modern agriculture has on the health of humans and animals and on the environment.

It has recently turned its attention to campaigning against genetic engineering and the use of antibiotics in intensive farming.

Patrick Holden, director of the Soil Association, said: "BSE and all the other recent food crises have shocked the public into an awareness that something is fundamentally wrong with our agriculture.

"The Soil Association is not about providing organic food for middle class people who can afford it. It is a question of fundamentally changing agricultural practice, which we believe will be beneficial to everyone's health.

"For 52 years we have been arguing that intensive farming is not compatible with healthy farming."

Jerwood winners

The Guardian Jerwood is the leading award for excellence among smaller voluntary groups. This year's five winners are also to receive money from the Christmas Appeal.

Deafblind UK provides support for people who are both deaf and blind — teaching them to communicate with their families.

Habitat for Humanity is a housing charity which aims to break down sectarian barriers in Belfast by encouraging people from all parts of the community to come together to build themselves affordable new homes.

Jessie's Fund takes music therapy into children's hospices to work with sick and dying children.

Free Form Arts Trust works all over the country bringing together artists and architects with communities to co-operate on urban regeneration projects, helping people improve their neighbourhoods.

Walsall Carers Centre is a local organisation offering support for carers of all ages and providing specialist help for young carers.

The Guardian
Christmas Charity Appeal

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Minister overrode advice to ban offal

James Meikle

JOHN MacGregor will tell the BSE inquiry today that he went over the heads of scientific advisers to ban beef offal from food supplies in 1989 because he was worried about seemingly healthy cattle infecting humans.

The former agriculture minister, responsible for the key plank in limiting the risk of catching human BSE, said in a written statement last night that the action was needed "to reassure the public and safeguard public health".

He was particularly concerned that offal was going into food from cattle that did not show classic "mad cow" signs but were still incubating the disease.

The move is hailed as the most important measure of the BSE crisis, helping to prevent complete meltdown of the industry when the link between BSE and its human equivalent, new variant CJD, was acknowledged in 1996.

Because of long incubation periods, the 32 people who have died of the disease are assumed to have been infected in the 1980s, even though it has become clear that rules enforcing the ban in slaughterhouses were flouted in later years.

In 1989, independent advisers on the Southwood committee and some senior civil servants saw no reason to recommend such prohibition. Mr MacGregor, who will give oral evidence to the inquiry today, is now given much of the credit for insisting on the measure. But he said in his statement there had been "considerable speculation" about who originally proposed the ban. "I suspect . . . a number of us, including myself, came independently to the conclusion that this was the right way to proceed."

Sir Richard Southwood's committee, which reported in February 1989, had suggested that baby food manufacturers should avoid some offal but had not recommended a legal ban. Mr MacGregor thought legislation necessary — and quickly considered whether a wider ban should be imposed.

He sought other scientific arguments and by early June his vets provided him with a list of parts of the animal where the infective agent for BSE might be present before the disease became obvious.

In a meeting with Sir Richard on June 9, the minister pointed to several concerns, including growing consumer pressure for an offal ban and the inability to control every market and slaughterhouse.

Mr MacGregor's statement said: "Although we held very firmly to the view that action should be based on the best scientific evidence, the combination of all these other factors suggested there was a case for going wider than baby food and banning the 'Southwood' offals of all bovine animals."

The former minister said Sir Richard described the recommendation on baby food as "a counsel of extreme prudence" and that "if one took further action without scientific evidence, it would be difficult to decide where the line should be drawn".

NFU's sunnier outlook after 1998 slump

James Meikle

FARMERS' leaders yesterday talked of bouncing back from the worst crisis since the 1930s, even as new estimates underlined their financial problems.

Falls in income this year of a third or a half — depending on key indicators of the health of farming — were predicted, but the National Farmers' Union said next year could be brighter.

The recent weakening of the pound, the world prices recovery and the resumption of beef exports next year all offered hope, as Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, called on the industry to work to end farming's boom-bust record of recent years.

For the UK's total income from farming in 1998, the Government forecasts a drop of a third, from about £3.4 billion to £2.3 billion — a figure based on the net income to farmers and their partners, directors, spouses and other family workers. The NFU argued that a truer figure — of just over £1.1 billion — would emerge if farm incomes were stripped of the labour contribution of the farmers' families and colleagues. Both figures include most of the £120 million rescue package that will help cut expected losses for hill farms but do little for much of the industry.

Doctors urge babywalkers to be banned

Sarah Boseley
Health Correspondent

BABYWALKERS should be banned, say doctors, because they cause many injuries to small children, who are often left in them unsupervised by parents unaware of the dangers.

In one of two articles on the issue in the journal Injury Prevention, published today, Denise Kendrick of the division of general practice at Nottingham university medical school said parents thought of walkers as a means of keeping the child quiet and safe and encouraging them to be mobile. But according to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, about4,000 children a year are injured in them.

"There have been repeated calls for a ban on babywalker manufacture and sale, and as health professionals we should support such campaigns," said Dr Kendrick.

Previous research has shown that between 12 and 60 per cent of children put in babywalkers suffered injuries, usually to the head and face. In the most common accidents, the child hits an obstacle and topples the babywalker over, or falls down the stairs.

The studies published today looked at the widespread use of babywalkers in Britain and the United States. Research in Nottingham among 1,600 parents with children aged one to three years showed that the 50 per cent who used the walkers were likely to be careless of safety in other respects, such as not having a stairgate or a fire guard. They did not consider their children to be at higher risk of head injuries, fractures, bruises and burns.

In the American study, most parents thought babywalkers were good for the child's development, when there was no evidence of this. "Paediatricians have repeatedly stated that infant walkers have no value and increase injuries," said Miriam Bar-on and colleagues at Louisiana state university school of medicine in New Orleans. "The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends a ban on the manufacture and sale of infant walkers."

The Nottingham research showed that two thirds of children who suffered a walker-related injury continued to be placed in them, said the authors, who recommended a return to the playpen for parents who use walkers for "baby-sitting".

RoSPA said some walkers did not meet the British standards laid down for manufacturers.

David Jenkins, the society's product safety adviser, said it first became concerned 20 years ago after a child crashed through a glass door in a babywalker. It had to be written on the packaging and on the walker that the baby must be supervised, he said.

Ancients top the philosophy ratings

John Ezard on how Plato and Aristotle beat 'overrated' Marx and Derrida

THOSE bearded 2,400-year-old Greeks Plato and Aristotle still rule the roost in philosophy. Karl Marx's reputation has withered away. Moderns like Derrida, Foucault and Saussure are dismissed as hopelessly over-inflated.

These are the unexpected results of the biggest international opinion survey yet carried among philosophy students and academics.

The findings, to be published on Friday, appear to undermine the view that recent linguistic or structuralist philosophers are gaining dominance on campuses.

They also suggest that metaphysical issues about the meaning of life still preoccupy students and their teachers far more than questions of whether the world is socially constructed through words.

The survey, by The Philosophers' Magazine, drew responses from 860 students and teachers. It places Aristotle and Plato clear top of those who have "contributed most to the advancement of human understanding". The most esteemed six were: Aristotle, 183 votes; Plato, 158; Kant, 152; Nietzsche, 114; Wittgenstein, 111; Hume, 99. The perennially controversial Friedrich Nietzsche also came third in the list of most overrated philosophers.

Wittgenstein, who wrote: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent", is the only 20th century thinker in the pantheon. Last night Jeremy Stangroom, the magazine's co-founder, said this might be partly because Derek Jarman's 1993 film had given him a high profile.

Though the magazine calls Jacques Derrida "an international icon of cultural studies", he easily topped, with 106 votes, the poll on philosopher "whose contribution to the subject has been most overrated".

Marx was second, with 90, followed by Nietzsche (87), Heidegger (76), Kant (71) and Descartes (66). Martin Heidegger, a once highly fashionable existentialist who died in 1976, remains tainted by charges of Nazi collaboration.

Jean Foucault straddled both polls but attracted muted enthusiasm. He got only 26 votes among admired philosophers and 56 among the overrated.

Votes were cast on the Internet and at philosophy conferences. Some 45 per cent of votes came from the United States, 15 per cent from Britain, 10 per cent from Canada and most of the rest from Europe.

Announcing the results, the magazine says they may reflect a degree of English-speaking bias. "Continental philosophy is notoriously sniffed at by Anglo-Saxon philosophers".

However, voting patterns consistently showed Aristotle as the world's favourite philosopher and Derrida as the most inflated. The US was one of the countries where alarm was recently voiced at the spread of European linguistic approaches. In the last 18 months two science professors, Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, have caused academic uproar with their book Intellectual Impostures. This charges numerous European theorists with flagrantly misunderstanding science, especially physics, in their academic writings.

Derrida's riposte to the book was to say: "Poor Sokal". Last night Dr Stangroom said the survey showed Sokal and Bricmont need not have worried. The European influence in intellectual circles had been over-estimated.

On Karl Marx's poor showing, Dr Stangroom said: "Events in eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union have had a huge impact on his reputation".

The Philosophers' Magazine can be ordered on www.philosophers.co.uk



Jacques Derrida: topped poll as the most overrated philosopher PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE PYKE

Ulster peace talks leader hails unsung hero Major

Rory Carroll

GEORGE Mitchell, the former US senator who brokered Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement, will tonight depart from his trademark discretion and single out John Major as the unsung hero of the peace process.

The former prime minister, accused of blundering because the IRA abandoned its first ceasefire, has been unfairly excluded from the adulation that has washed over Tony Blair, Mr Mitchell says. "Because he first involved me in the process, and because I know him well, I have been disappointed that his contribution has not been properly recognised, especially in the US."

Concerned lest the present government should hog the history books at the expense of those who did the donkey-work, he traces the Good Friday deal to the 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement and the Downing Street Declaration signed by Mr Major in 1993.

Brother of leading Iraqi dissident found dead

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE brother of the leader of an Iraqi opposition group backed by the CIA and MI6 has been found dead in the Jordanian capital Amman, having apparently committed suicide. But his death prompted speculation that he had been killed by agents of Saddam Hussein.

Emad Alawi, aged 55, the brother of Ayad Alawi who heads the Iraqi National Accord (INA), was found dead on Saturday with a gunshot wound to the head outside his Amman flat.

Jordanian security services were quoted yesterday as saying there was evidence of suicide. Emad Alawi, a businessman who left Iraq in 1995, was believed to have financial problems. Baghdad is understood to have confiscated his assets as a punishment for his brother's defection.

"Early indications are that it was sucide but we cannot confirm or deny it," a spokesman for the INA in London said yesterday. He said although Alawi was not active in the resistance movement, being related to a leader coutld have made him a target.

The London-based Al-Hayat newspaper yesterday quoted "independent sources" in Jordan as saying he had died in a way suggesting he was killed by agents on behalf of the Iraqi government.

In his first British newspaper interview, Ayad Alawi — who survived an assassination attempt in London in 1978 — told the Guardian last month: "We understand the power structure in Iraq, and our policy is to break it down so that Saddam will crack."

While Western intelligence agencies — including MI6 — value the INA's networks, its critics say the group is penetrated by Iraqi agents. A coup attempt by the INA in 1996 was foiled.

In London yesterday, promoters of Indict, a United States-funded campaign to place President Saddam and 12 of his associates on trial, said they believed the sudden decision by Barzan al-Tikriti, the Iraqi dictator's half-brother, to return to Iraq was prompted by fear of arrest. Mr Barzan recently left his post as Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

Ann Clywd, the Labour MP and chairperson on Indict, said: "We believe it is no coincidence that Barzan chose to return to Iraq for the first time in almost nine years, despite his very public feud with Saddam's murderous son, Uday, at just the time that Indict had commenced proceedings against him."

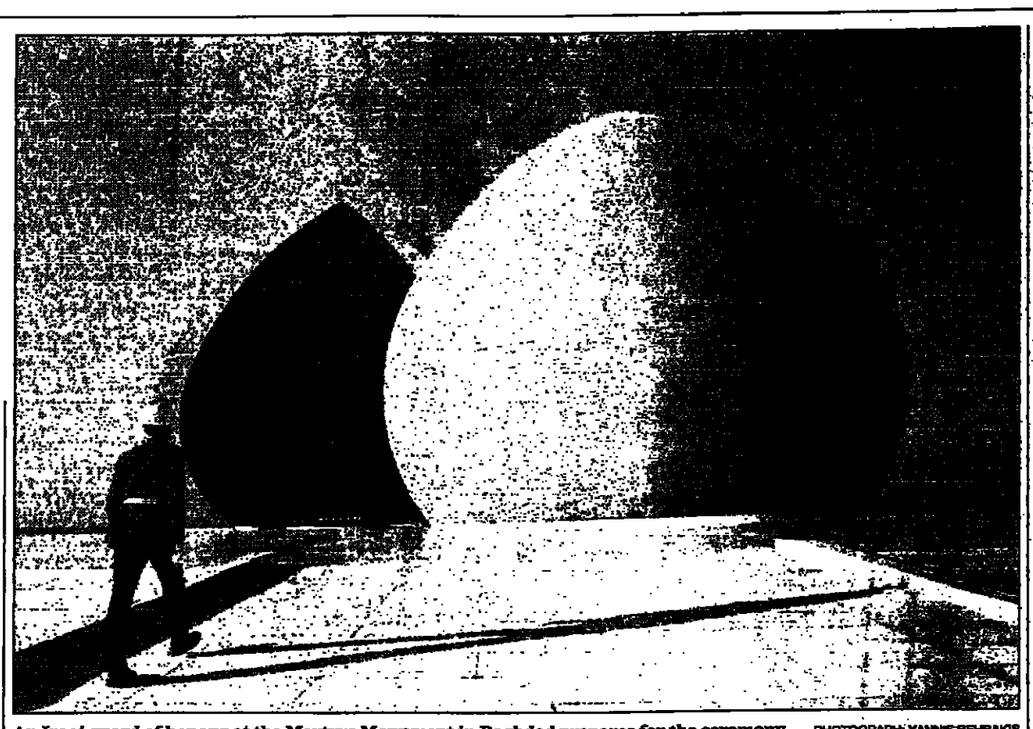
Indict has recently been given $3 million (£1.8 million) by the US Congress. Its press conference yesterday was attended by Ahmed Chalabi, president of the Iraqi National Congress, the most prominent opposition group and rival to the INA. Dr Chalabi has just returned from Tehran.

Ms Clwyd said: "As head of Iraqi intelligence, [Barzan] was directly responsible for widespread acts of murder, torture, disappearances, extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detention and rape."

She said the campaign had been encouraged by the law lords' ruling last week that the former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet did not have immunity from extradition.

Apart from President Saddam and his sons Uday and Qusay, Indict's list includes Vice-President Taha Yasin Ramadan and the deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz.

The London-based Iraqi Communist Party said yesterday that a general named Sami, who it said was a senior officer of protocol in the presidential palace, had been executed on November 19.



An Iraqi guard of honour at the Martyrs Monument in Baghdad prepares for the ceremony. PHOTOGRAPH: YANNIS BEHRAKIS

US inquiry widens to Clinton fundraising

Martin Kettle in Washington

THE Republican-controlled committee that is considering impeachment against President Bill Clinton moved to widen the scope of its inquiry yesterday, triggering fresh charges of political bias from Democrat opponents.

The Republicans used their majority on the House of Representatives judiciary committee to subpoena senior law enforcement officers, including the FBI director Louis Freeh, thus broadening the impeachment inquiry into a dispute over campaign fundraising. The vote of 20-15 went along party lines.

The moves angered Democrats, who accused the Republicans of trying to turn the country's most solemn constitutional process into what a senior Democrat, John Conyers, called "a partisan witchhunt".

The subpoenas focused on Clinton administration memos urging the attorney-general, Janet Reno, to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the president's 1996 campaign. The memos were written by Mr Freeh and the federal prosecutor, Charles LaBella.

The independent counsel Kenneth Starr was also subpoened to hand over evidence gathered from John Huang, a key suspect in the fundraising row.

Paul McNulty, a spokesman for the Republicans, said: "The committee has received information which suggests that the campaign-funding abuse memos may contain allegations of criminal wrongdoing by the president. The committee is duty bound to investigate that information."

The subpoenas follow a decision last week by the Washington federal judge Norma Holloway Johnson, who supervises the grand jury in the Starr investigation, that the memos were not relevant to the impeachment inquiry and should not be released.

Voting took place during a day of public hearings by the committee in Washington, where 12 witnesses gave evidence on the law of perjury.

"We are not exercising or participating in a wild goose chase," the committee chairman, Henry Hyde, said. "We are not bound by the parameters of the Starr referral. And anything else that comes to our attention while we are still duly constituted, it seems to me, is justifiable."

The moves are a deliberately high-risk strategy to create a strongly partisan atmosphere in which to more easily vote articles of impeachment.

Voting is expected to take place on the committee in about 10 days, followed by a full House vote a few days later. The articles are expected to charge Mr Clinton with perjury, obstruction of justice and abuse of power in his handling of his relationship with the former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

The Republican moves delighted their supporters and prompted a chorus of condemnation from the Democrats.

> 'We cannot play when you propose to overturn a national election'

"One week away from such a monumental vote is no time to commence an entirely new area of investigation into campaign finance," Mr Conyers told the committee. Turning to Mr Hyde, he said: "We cannot play hide and seek when you propose to overturn a national election."

"Right now we're in chaos," complained the House Democrats' leader, Richard Gephardt, who called on the House Speaker-elect, Bob Livingston, to "take control" of the process.

The White House denounced the turn of events as "not a serious exercise".

The White House is still debating whether to accept Mr Hyde's invitation to give evidence to the committee. While Mr Clinton is certain not to give evidence, his lawyer, David Kendall, is expected to submit a statement of his defence in the next few days.

No decision has yet been made about whether Mr Kendall or the White House senior counsel Charles Ruff will appear in person.

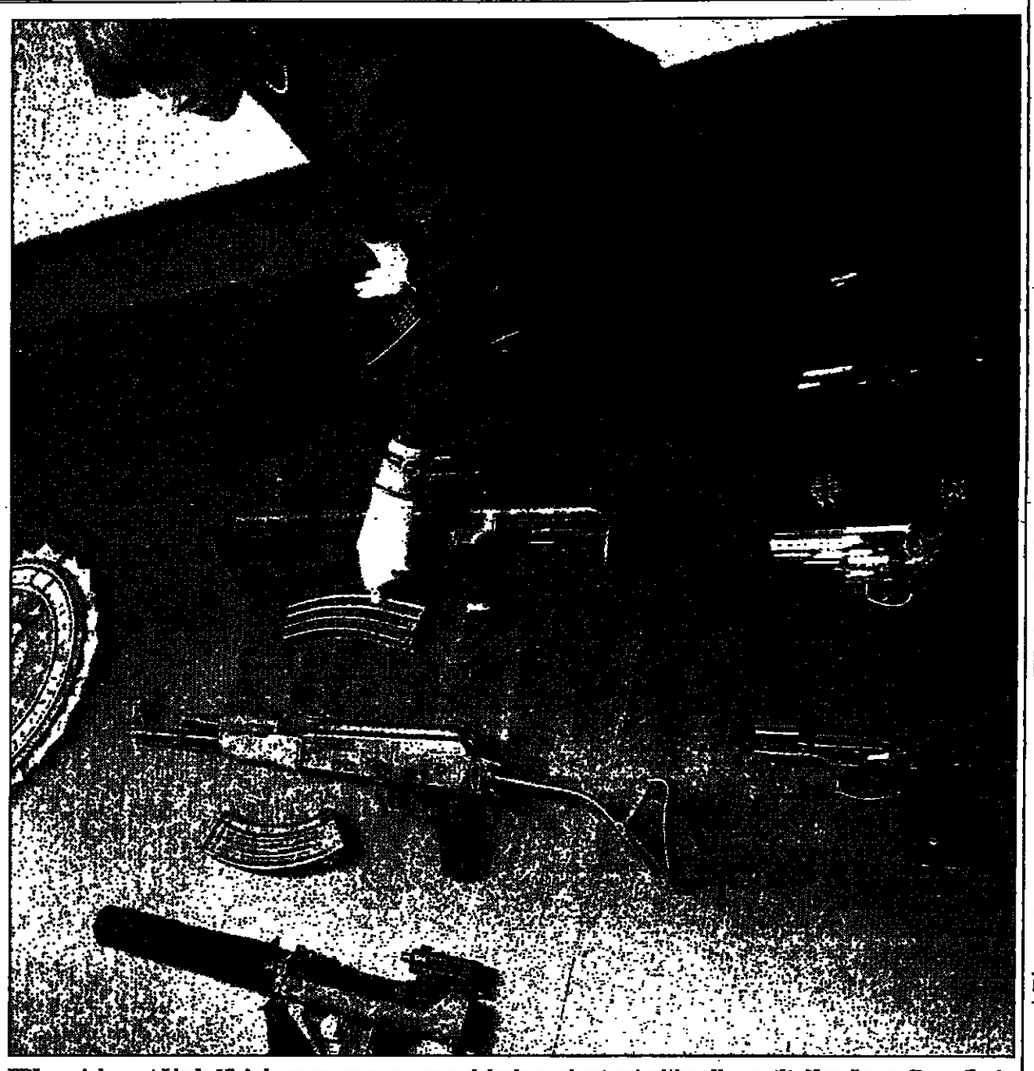




Seth Privacky (below), accused of murdering five members of his family, including his parents (above) PHOTOGRAPHS: MUSKEGON CHRONICLE



As another small town comes to terms with a multiple killing by disaffected teenagers, gun lobbyists go to court to defend Americans' inalienable right to bear arms, complaining that a new federal law makes buying weapons more difficult. **Michael Ellison** in New York reports



FBI special agent Linda Vizi shows weapons recovered during a shoot-out with police on the New Jersey Turnpike in September. They include an M-16, an AK-47, a Mac-11 and assorted pistols. PHOTOGRAPH: DANIEL HULSHIZER/AP

American gun clubs go to war on new law

UNITED STATES gun clubs went to court yesterday to fight for their inalienable right to bear arms on the same day as an 18-year-old was accused of shooting dead five members of his family.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) claimed that tight new laws on buying guns violated their privacy, a point lost on the people of Dalton, Michigan. Two school friends, Seth Privacky and Steven Wallace, are accused of murdering Seth's father, mother, grandfather, brother and his brother's girlfriend. There was no known motive.

Action by the NRA came as a national system was introduced to run instant background checks on people buying guns. It is aimed at reducing the time taken to gather the information from five days to five minutes. Reasons for refusing a customer include criminal and domestic-violence convictions and mental illness.

The measure had an instant effect, but for the wrong reasons. Gun dealers around the country said they had trouble getting through to the Federal Bureau of Investigation phone bank handling the checks. Even when they did make a connection, the computer had stopped functioning.

"We're the biggest wholesaler and dealer in the state of Indiana and today we have not been able to sell one single shotgun because all the lines are busy," said Doug Keisler, owner of Keisler Police Supply in Jeffersonville. Normally at this time of year — the hunting season — he sells about 25 shotguns a day.

The system checks buyers at the country's 105,000 licensed dealers against lists of people disqualified from owning guns. An FBI spokesman said that of 5,000 calls they received, 3,300 were approved, 12 rejected and the others delayed for more inquiries.

The checks were brought in under the terms of the Brady Law, named after the press secretary who was seriously wounded when John Hinckley tried to murder President Ronald Reagan in 1981. That law was passed nearly five years ago but recent events have given it more urgency.

Last March two boys, aged 12 and 13, dressed in camouflage and shot dead four pupils and a teacher in an ambush at their school in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Pupils at Westside middle school

> 'Today we have not been able to sell one single shotgun'

said they believed that the attack had been planned after a girl said she did not want to go out with one of the boys. The guns came from the home of the other boy's grandfather.

The Jonesboro killings were part of a series in schools over a six-month period that claimed 15 lives and included attacks in Mississippi, Kentucky and Oregon.

There are said to be guns in 40 per cent of American homes — 200 million weapons, or four for each child aged between six and 16. About 2,200 people aged between 10 and 19 commit suicide each year, two-thirds of them with a gun. More than 10,700 people are murdered with guns each year.

New Orleans and Chicago have taken out lawsuits against gun makers and it is thought that as many as 60 cities might follow suit. Chicago is claiming $433 million (£270 million) against the industry, claiming that it causes a public nuisance because of the extra costs to police, fire services and hospitals.

The NRA claims in its lawsuit that the checks under the new measure constitute a register of gun owners, contrary to federal law. The FBI says that this is not the purpose and that the information gathered would be used for statistical sampling and auditing.

But Handgun Control Inc, a pressure group based in Washington DC, says the new checks might make access to weapons easier for criminals, drug users and the mentally ill. It said the old five-day waiting rule was probably more thorough and provided a cooling-off period.

Lebanese president sacks PM

David Hirst in Beirut

LEBANON'S new president, General Emile Lahoud, has sacked his prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, the billionaire tycoon who for the past six years has dominated the Lebanese political scene.

The president, who took office last week, has begun consultations to find a replacement. This is almost certain to be Salim al-Hoss, a softly spoken academic turned politician with a reputation for integrity, who served as prime minister four times during the civil war. Seventy-one of the 128 MPs have now declared for him.

The change of prime ministers looks as though it will be as smoothly accomplished as it was wholly unexpected. It had been considered virtually certain that Gen Lahoud would retain Mr Hariri, whose departure might have adversely affected the economy. Gen Lahoud offered him the post. When Mr Hariri turned it down, it was believed to be a manouevre. If so, it has backfired. And the national currency has so far held up.

The president's personal standing in public opinion was already high, but with this dramatic beginning to his presidency the Lebanese people have become hopeful that they will now enjoy a new, more responsible form of rule.

Ostensibly, the differences between the two men arose over the constitution and their different interpretations of the so-called Tayif agreement that marked the end of the civil war in 1991. Mr Hariri said that the president — who by tradition is a Maronite Christian — was appropriating powers to choose a prime minister — always a Sunni Muslim — that properly belonged to parliament. But behind this lay a much deeper antagonism.

Gen Lahoud, a British-trained former army commander, is clearly determined to be no mere figurehead. Coexistence between two such "titans", as the local press calls them, with such different political outlooks would have been very difficult. It was evidently vital for him to assert himself from the outset.

However, that he is doing so with such aplomb and apparent success is almost certainly because he has the backing of Syria's President Hafez al-Assad, the ultimate power-broker in Lebanon. Most pro-Syrian parliamentary factions that formerly stood with Mr Hariri have turned against him.

When he came to power in 1992 Mr Hariri was widely welcomed as a "saviour" who would restore Lebanon to its pre-war ascendancy as business capital of the Middle East. But his vast "infrastructural" projects brought little benefit to most Lebanese, whose living standards continued to decline. He favoured services over industry, finance over the wider economic interest; he neglected social services. Corruption, waste and bureaucratic inefficiency flourished.

In his inaugural address, which has been called almost "revolutionary" by Lebanese standards, Gen Lahoud electrified the people. "The thief will be punished, no matter who he is, along with the corrupt, the wasteful and those taking bribes." He promised social justice, and an end to the "politics of sectarianism".

This was taken to be a criticism not just of Mr Hariri's administration, but of the whole ruling class. Deputies applauded him enthusiastically, but Beirut newspapers said that if he were really going to "cut off" the thieves' hands there would hardly be anyone left to applaud him.

They also said it would be almost impossible for Mr Hariri to come up with a ministerial team matching up to these exacting new ethical standards. At the very least, if he did, his wings would be clipped. Evidently he preferred to quit.

Iran debates female privacy over health

Geneive Abdo in Tehran

MEDICAL rules guaranteeing privacy for women are about to take effect in Iran after years of debate. Female patients will soon be treated by women paramedics, able to buy personal items from women pharmacists and rest in hospital wards free of male intrusion.

Under a bill expected to take effect in the coming weeks, Iranian women will also gain a legal right to demand treatment by female doctors. Whenever possible, female patients will be tended only by women staff.

But ideological purity has been modified by modern medical reality. Proponents of the bill initially demanded that no woman should be treated by a male doctor under any circumstance. They had to compromise because there are not enough women doctors in Iran to meet the demand.

The issue has triggered a national debate touching upon religion, culture and whether men are more competent doctors than women. In Iranian society the "purity" of women is a priority; under Islamic law, women are obliged to wear veils and long clothes masking their bodies. Yet, there is a consensus that Islamic texts do not bar women from seeing male doctors.

Proponents of the changes, such as Marziyeh Vahid Dastdjerdi, a gynaecologist and one of a handful of women MPs, say women should not be required to expose their bodies to men. But critics of the bill argue that prudish women living in villages and small towns, who favour the measure, will lose out because in certain fields, such as neurology and brain science, there are far more male doctors than women.

Four thousand doctors and medical students signed a petition addressed to parliament, which listed their objections to the measures. They argued that a patient may fall under the knife of an overworked female surgeon, or endure long waits for other types of treatment which could easily be provided by male medical staff.

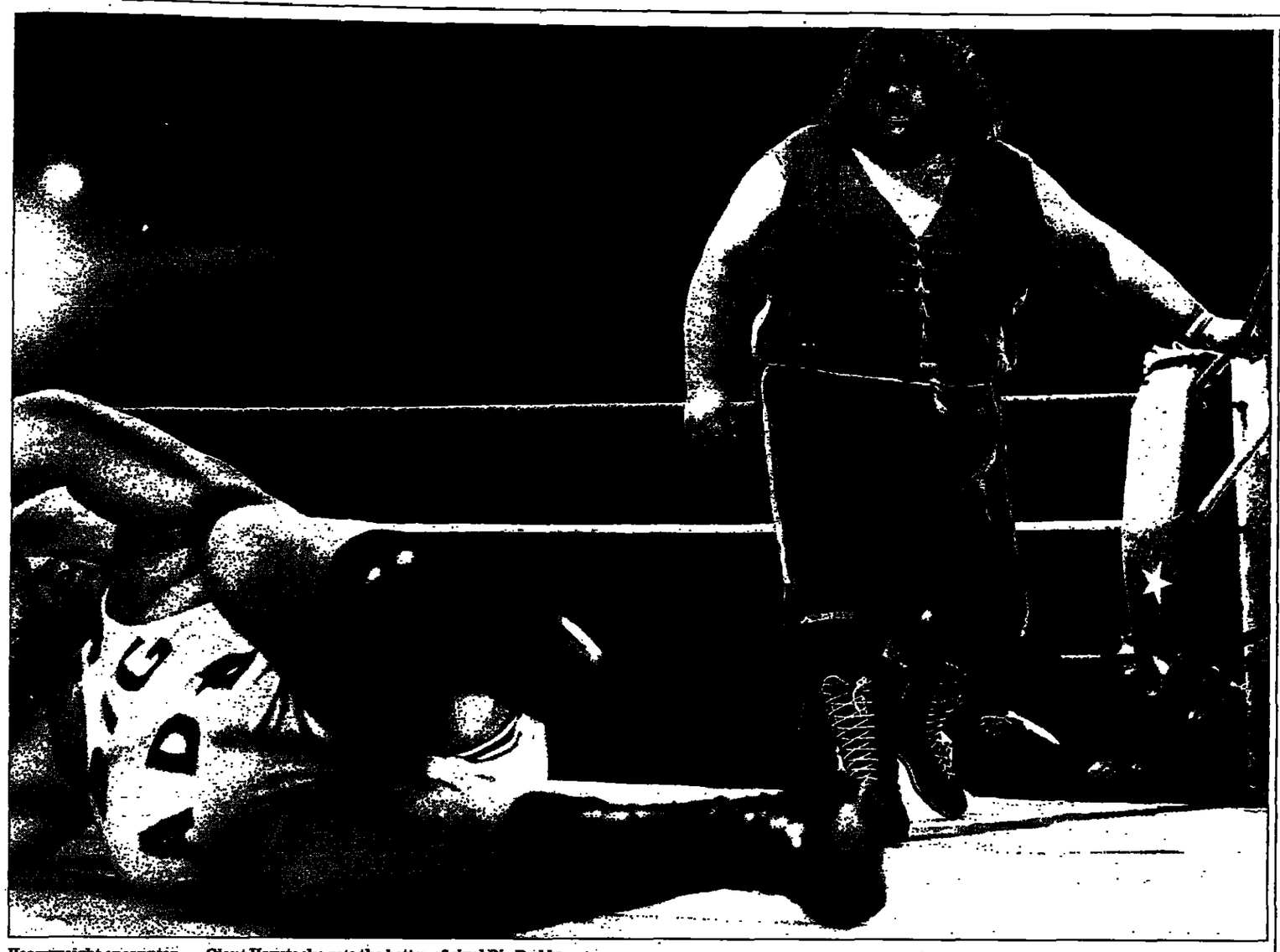
"It is natural in any country for women to want to be given injections by other women and men to see male doctors, even in Europe," said Babak Qaraee Moqadam, a GP and board member of Iran's Medical Association.

"But there is a practical problem. There may be enough female doctors in cities, like Tehran, but there aren't enough in the countryside." In recent years, the government has tried to address the shortage of female gynaecologists. After seven years of medical school, students must take an examination to become specialists. In the test for gynaecology, most women are accepted for a limited number of positions even when their scores are lower than those of male competitors.

The clash between medical reality and ideological concern is particularly acute in places such as fertility clinics.

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Heavyweight encounter . . . Giant Haystacks gets the better of rival Big Daddy

PHOTOGRAPH: EAMONN McCABE

Giant Haystacks

Playing the bad guy

GIANT Haystacks, who has died from cancer aged 52, was promoted as the biggest and baddest of them all in the 1970s golden era of television wrestling.

Come Saturday afternoons 16 million fans tuned in, hoping that the 49-stone, 6ft 11in hulk would get his comeuppance. With his wild, flowing black mane, mountain-man beard and outrageous behaviour he became an international star, counting ex-Beatle Paul McCartney and heavyweight boxing champion Evander Holyfield among his fans.

It was, of course, all a creation of showbiz razzmatazz, a fantasy he was happy to go along with because it provided an income for his wife and young family. And it was, he later admitted, a persona he came to love because it "made me a somebody."

Martin Ruane, the man behind the media monster, was an entirely different character. He was a kind, intelligent and deeply religious man who was devoted to his petite and perky childhood sweetheart wife, Rita, who was by his side to the end.

A couple of years ago Haystacks was on top of the world. He signed a deal with his US wrestling-movie star pal Hulk Hogan that would have relaunched him on the lucrative American circuit, earning $5,000 dollars a week. But his two-year fight against cancer followed a doomed business deal that stripped him of all he had, including his £150,000 Victorian home. As he underwent debilitating chemotherapy he confessed that for the first time in his life he was really afraid. But he never once felt sorry for himself, asked "why me?" or gave up hope.

He was a devout Roman Catholic, a faith shared by Rita who he met and married when he was 17 years old and who bore him three strapping sons, Martin, Stephen, and Noel. Rita was constantly by his side helping him during his illness — with few knowing that she, too, was being treated for cancer.

Baby Haystacks made a gigantic entry into the world, weighing in at 14lb 6oz. His Irish father Martin, a Wimpey foreman, was also a fine figure of a man, dubbed The Black Prince because of his resemblance to movie star Clark Gable.

Although born in London Martin grew up in the tough neighbourhood of Salford, Manchester, where his freak size inevitably made him a target for older bullies. His formal education at St Thomas's ended when he was 14 after an aggressive teacher hit him with a cane — and wished he hadn't bothered.

As a young married man he sweated it out in a woodwork factory and tyre firm before joining the motorway gangs as a heavy vehicle driver.

He first capitalised on his physical attributes as a doorman in local nightclubs, where he could pick up 50 quid a week which was good money in those days. He earned it. He described it as "a tough, villainous world and I had to survive. I was involved with the gangsters. They were some tough cookies. Without looking I attracted trouble. I had to know how to handle it."

Martin was 24 when he first stepped reluctantly into a canvas ring after being persuaded by a grappling pal to try his luck. "I had never fancied the sport," he said. "Appearing in public was something that was just not in my make-up."

> 'I felt like a conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, able to play on people's emotions: making them hate me or love me as I decreed. The showman in me was beginning to show'

After six months being battered from pillar to post, he was ready to throw in the towel. Then, almost by magic, the ring became a welcoming place. He began to love the thrill of the fight, the roar of the crowd, the recognition — and the money.

"I felt like a conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, able to play on people's emotions: making them hate me or love me as I decreed. The showman in me was beginning to show."

Although he had always put himself in the category of being a somewhat handsome man he realised there was no way he could project himself as one of the blue-eyed, baby faces of the sport. So he created the nasty Giant Haystacks. And a wrestling phenomenon was born.

He became someone the public could relate to. He recalled: "They wanted to see this big, bullying ignorant pig who tormented their heroes get his come-uppance and end up on his arse." But he was on the receiving end too: his injury list reads 10 fingers broken; both kneecaps fractured; elbows smashed; ribs crushed countless times; collarbone bust; front teeth knocked out. And so many cuts that he had more than 500 stitches.

Those highly-hyped TV contests were choreographed with all the creativity of a ballet. But he also fought for real abroad, particularly in Germany, India and Africa, where his fans treated him like a god.

Martin took the view that professional wrestling was a sport and entertainment that pleased millions of people. It brought him fame but not a fortune. He rarely topped £600 a week at his peak, which often meant driving hundreds of miles between nightly venues, staying at cheap B&B and taking home more aches and pains to nurse.

As he got into his mid-forties Martin decided the time had come to put his bit of hard earned capital into a motor business. It was an unhappy experience but he told me: "I don't regret living my life the way I have, playing the Giant Haystacks role. Never regret what you do. There is very little that I would change."

For the past 12 months we had worked together, with his former tag partner Tony 'Banger' Walsh, writing a television comedy series about the wrestling world.

The last time I saw him he was full of enthusiasm, bristling with ideas and we laughed like loons at our own jokes in the scenes we had written. That's how I will remember Giant Haystacks.

Barrie Tracey

Simon Garfield adds: I first met Haystacks in a dressing room shortly after he had spent 10 minutes pounding a very small Austrian man against a post. He changed out of his country yokel costume beneath a towel, the way people do on a beach, and his sweat seemed to form a pool around his chair. The myth had it that he was still 49 stone, but he explained that he hadn't weighed himself for quite a while. "What's the point?" he asked.

He spoke in a soft, gruff voice, and he said that wrestling was the only way he knew of expressing his inner rage without being arrested. He was angry about several things: how little he got paid (£60 a fight); how and why British wrestling came off television in 1988 (he said he wanted to strangle the man responsible); and how he was misunderstood as a person. For example, because he was religious he wouldn't fight on Sundays.

He would talk often of his influential friends: he claimed that Frank Sinatra was a loyal fan, and said he had met many ambassadors in his travels overseas. "I'm an honorary citizen of Zimbabwe," he said "and that can open a lot of doors."

He had other jobs away from wrestling, but most of them ended in tears. For a while he ran a debt collection agency, and prided himself on not having to use a baseball bat. Three years ago he was offered a lucrative contract to wrestle in America, where he would be billed as the Loch Ness Monster, but his cancer took hold before he could fulfil his dream.

Like all the best wrestlers, he had many names in and out of the ring — Haystack Colhoun, Luke, Louis, Martin — but he will be remembered as one of the last great showmen, a man who ate 3lbs of bacon and a dozen eggs every morning, and took great delight in being the most immovable, evil force in a mythical and vanished world.

Giant Haystacks (Martin Ruane), wrestler, born 1946, died November 29, 1998

Theodore Newhouse

From critic to media tycoon

THEODORE Newhouse, who has died aged 95, was the last of the three American brothers who founded the vast media empire which carried their name. He served not only as business manager of the rapidly expanding family business but as its principal technical expert, being deeply versed in the intricacies of newspaper production and distribution.

By the end of their working careers the intensely secretive brothers had created a privately-held corporation now conservatively valued at $15 billion. Their descendants — and the family is irrevocably committed to nepotism — own 26 American newspapers; the Condé Nast stable of magazines including the New Yorker, Vogue and Vanity Fair; cable television channels in 17 American states; and various other media interests in the United States and abroad. Until its recent sale they also owned the sprawling Random House publishing conglomerate.

The brothers were among the eight children of a Jewish immigrant couple who had settled in Bayonne, New Jersey, at the turn of the century. The oldest, Samuel, was hired without salary by a local lawyer and, at the age of 16, put in charge of a newspaper his employer had acquired to settle a bad debt. Within five years Sam had made it into a money-spinner and, in 1916, was earning the extraordinary salary of $30,000 a year.

When he acquired his own newspaper in Staten Island he recruited his brothers Norman and Theodore to help him expand his empire. Both were trained on the job and continued the frugal tradition started by Samuel. In spite of their growing wealth, they toured their widening empire by public transport and disconcerted employees by arriving at their desks at 6am. Nor were their duties confined to advertising and production — Norman did a simultaneous stint as a reporter in Staten Island and Theodore acted as music critic.

Where they faced competition the group could be ruthless in overcoming it. In 1982 the Cleveland Press folded after Newhouse paid its owners $22.5 million for "assets" most observers thought worthless. That left the field to the Newhouse group's Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The company structure, which Theodore helped to devise, was proof against government assaults. After Sam's death in 1979 his heirs declared the value of his estate as $91 million, on which $19 million was payable in taxes. The Internal Revenue Service countered with a valuation of £962 million and a consequent tax bill of $658 million. It also ruled that the family's assessment was so manifestly fraudulent that it was imposing a penalty to bring the total tax to £920 million.

After the inevitable court battle the US Tax Court found in favour of the Newhouses. This, as one observer wryly noted, allowed the family to have it both ways, legally reducing the value of their company for tax purposes but reaping the full worth of any bits they might want to sell.

In spite of the tight budgetary control that Theodore imposed on the group, the broader management was quite relaxed. Those running publications were allowed considerable freedom in managerial and editorial decisions and there was no attempt to impose a common editorial view. In fact, few beyond the brothers' immediate circle had the least idea of their political views.

THIS relaxed regime, however, did not result in any notable journalistic quality. Apart from such exceptions as the New Yorker, Newhouse employees understand that they have been launched into waters as smooth as the company can contrive and that their job is then to run a steady ship.

One inviolable theme runs through the business, however — that only members of the family may wield ultimate control. Theodore was actively involved in day-to-day decisions until his health failed when he was 83. More than 20 younger Newhouses now run the company and, when they unexpectedly failed to bid for one newspaper, the half-joking explanation was that the family had run out of Newhouses to manage it.

His daughter predeceased Theodore. He is survived by his wife and two granddaughters.

Harold Jackson

Theodore Newhouse, publisher, born July 19, 1903; died November 28, 1998

Birthdays

David Batty, footballer, 30; **Nigel Calder**, science writer, 67; **Prof Sir Alan Cook**, geophysicist, former master, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 76; **Sir Frank Cooper**, defence analyst, 76; **Andrew George**, Lib Dem MP, 40; **David Green**, director, VSO, 50; **Michael Green**, chairman, Carlton Communications, 51; **Gen Alexander Haig**, former US Secretary of State, 74; **Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Harding**, former Chief of the Defence Staff, 65; **Patricia Hewitt**, MP, economic secretary to the Treasury, 50; **Dr Brian Lang**, chief executive, British Library, 53; **Dame Winifred Prentice**, former president, Royal College of Nursing, 88; **Monica Seles**, tennis player, 25.

A Country Diary

KENT: It's close on twenty years since I last saw the wild service tree at the Chequers Inn in Smarden. But it is still there, wedged between the back of the pub and the car park. Its crimson-tinged, maple-like leaves were almost all fallen, but it didn't look a day older. Yet its humble appearance belies the fact that this is one of the scarcest and most fascinating of English native trees. Also the fact that in the Kent and Sussex Weald (one of the species' heartlands) it's known as the chequer tree — which seems too much of a coincidence for a tree growing in a pub called the Chequers.

The secret of the tree's charisma lies in its berries, bunches of brown fruits that, once they've been softened by frost, are edible and have a taste quite unlike any other British wild fruit, a combination of sultana, tamarind and prune.

In prehistoric times, when the tree was much commoner, they must have been one of the few sources of sugariness in the wild. And up until the Great War they were still gathered and sold in the Weald like a kind of sweetmeat, being customarily bound up in strings and hung above the hearth to be picked off and munched one by one.

They were also made into various kinds of drink — hence the Chequers connection. It wasn't a beer in the strict sense but probably a liqueur something like sloe gin, or a fermented wine. Smarden has its own house recipe.

RICHARD MABEY

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

DENNIS SKINNER MP: In a column on page 16, November 2, 1998, we expressed the view that Dennis Skinner, the Labour MP, and other Labour MPs, opposed the reform of the present electoral system because they hoped that under it socialism would one day triumph by trickery. We said that Entryism was the name of their game. We accept that we were wrong to use the term "Entryism". We did not intend to suggest that Dennis Skinner or anyone else referred to in the article was in any way dishonest or disloyal to the Labour Party. Mr Skinner joined the Labour Party more than 40 years ago and has represented Bolsover in the House of Commons since 1970. He has been voted on to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party from 1978 to 1998 and again from 1994 until earlier this year. While Mr Skinner has never hidden his leftwing Labour beliefs, he has been a loyal member of the party. He has never been a member of any other political party. He is invited to speak to Labour party constituencies all over the country, including those of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. We apologise for any embarrassment caused by the column.

OUR EXPLANATION of the rules for a no win, no fee scheme to cover libel cases, Page 25, yesterday, may have remained confusing in the published version. The rules allow a solicitor to agree beforehand an uplift, a supplement, to his fee of anything up to 100 per cent should he win. He could therefore, by prior agreement in a winning case, double his fee. However, the additional payment would be taken from the client's damages and the amount that may be taken from damages for this purpose can usually not exceed 25 per cent. Say the solicitor's costs are £5,000 (which would be paid by the loser) and he has agreed an uplift of 100 per cent. Suppose his client gets damages of £10,000. Even though the uplift would be £5,000, the solicitor can take only £2,500, that is 25 per cent of damages.

IN OUR front page report about absinthe yesterday, we described it as 70 per cent proof. We should have said 70 per cent by volume, making it something like twice as strong as most spirits. The system of measurement by degrees proof was discontinued nearly 20 years ago.

IN A report on page 7 yesterday, headed Prosaic business of putting price on poetry, about life after the demise of Oxford University Press's poetry list, we referred to Joy Shapcock. She is, you may have guessed, the poet, Jo Shapcott. Apologies.

THE Royal Mail "spokesman" referred to in a report headed, Return to gender, page 25, yesterday, about male chauvinism in the organisation, was, in fact, a "spokeswoman". Apologies.

THE FAMILY name of the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt was spelled incorrectly twice in a review of a concert by the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir on page 12, G2, November 30.

THE SOLUTION to 18 down in the Crossword on Monday did, as promised in yesterday's corrections, appear on Page 30 yesterday, but wrongly. The clue was: She's a real swinger in Paris life. The answer we gave was Valeria. It should have been Valerie.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Death Notices

DUNNING, Genevieve (Genny) McMenamy, peacefully on 30th November. Beloved wife of Duncan for 48 years and sister of Bill. Dearly loved mother of Dannette, Kathy and Elizabeth and grandmother of Sam, Sarah, Jack, Kate and Robert. A Thanksgiving Service to celebrate Genny's life will be held at All Souls Church, Langham Place, London W1 on Wednesday 16th December at 12.30 pm. Family flowers only but donations, if desired, to All Souls Church (at the address above).

FERGOLD, Reverend Ralph Edward Pearce, peacefully at home on 30th November 1998, aged 82. Dearly loved husband of Patricia, father of Elizabeth and John and grandfather of Lucy, Anna, Harriet and William. Funeral private. Memorial Service on 11th January 1999; church yet to be arranged. Family flowers only; donations to The Alzheimer's Disease Society and the RNLI and enquiries to David Binks of Hitchin 01462 450249.

GAUBERT, Patricia Sandbach (formerly Miller, née Nesbit), on 27th November, 1998, peacefully, aged 63 years. Funeral Service to be held at the Parish Church of St. Mary, Cheadle, Cheshire, on Friday, 11th December at 1.00pm. Family flowers only please. Donations is desired to the Salvation Army or the N.S.P.C.C. Enquiries to Jonathon Alcock & Sons Ltd. Tel 0161 428 2097.

MAURER (née Frankel, Joan, peacefully in her sleep on 29th November, aged 88 years, of Ortel Road, Fulwood, Sheffield. Much loved by her family and friends. Service at Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium on Monday 7th December at 3.30pm. No flowers please, but donations made payable to Oxfam may be sent to John Heath & Sons, Funeral Directors, Sheffield S4 7LS.

SEYMOUR, Raymond Charles, retired Chemistry Dept., University of Bristol, peacefully on 27th November, 1998 in Sir Michael Sobell House, Oxford. Beloved husband of Erica, loving father of Carol, Janie, Kate and Andi and proud grandfather to Daniel, Lawrence, Vicky and Nick. The funeral service will take place on Friday 4th December at 12.45 pm in the Memorial Chapel, Oxford Crematorium. No flowers. Donations in his memory for Sir Michael Sobell House may be sent to Reeves & Pain, 288 Abingdon Road, Oxford OX1 4TE.

In Memoriam

GOLD, John, 2nd December 1920 - 9th June 1986. Love you, miss you. Always in our hearts. What a wonderful world. Love Una, Louise and Max.

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Comment

Diary

Simon Bowers

A MESSAGE has been passed to the Diary on behalf of the Chancellor's economic advisor, Ed Balls, who has apparently lost his voice. It concerns yesterday's Diary report that, despite his unpopular efforts to sell off parts of the post office, he hopes to be parachuted into Bill O'Brian's Normanton seat — by happy coincidence next door to that of his MP wife, Yvette Cooper. According to Ed, this is a rumour — first cited, you recall, in the Sunday Times — without foundation. Indeed it may be a Mandelsonian plot, he thinks, and could even hurt Yvette in Pontefract. Trust me, Ed, to harm Yvette is not our intention; however we must — and will — get to the bottom of this. In the meantime we've sent Ed a pack of cough sweets for his throat.

STAYING with Mr Balls, we are reminded of an intriguing exchange between him and Bill Morris this summer. The Treasury team had booked several boxes at the Albert Hall for various guests during the Proms — the TGWU chief among them. Gordon, being sponsored by the TGWU, was naturally anxious to make a good impression, so you can imagine his horror when Ed — presumably carried away by the passion of the music — bawled from his box: "We didn't stick you on the court of the Bank of England to criticise government economic policy." Unexpectedly, however, Bill's reply was politeness itself. "We'll talk about this later, Ed," he said. Stranger still, not the slightest murmur of dissent is now to be heard from Bill, who breakfasts with Ed on a monthly basis these days. What an intriguing young chap Ballsy is.

ANOTHER scurrilous rumour is festering around Murdoch's Wapping base. It concerns an intimate encounter in the mirrored aerobics hall next to the fourth-floor gym over a fortnight ago between a Sun employee and another News International worker. Had they been of differing sexes it might, perhaps, have made a splendid News of the World feature, however this not being the case, management — under pressure to observe Mr Yelland's new anti-outing policy — fired the two gentlemen instead. We ring Jane Reed, NI corporate affairs director, and ask her to put a stop to this gossip. "Sex in the gym. Yes, yes — that rumour has been flying around here for quite a while," says Jane with a laugh. "There's no truth in it. Certainly no one has been sacked." Say no more, Jane. We'll draw a line under these unpleasant whispers here and now.

OUR attention has been drawn to a delightful match-making agency on the Florida based Stormfront website. "Use White Singles to meet like-minded people for friendship and love!" suggests the home page. Female readers may be interested to learn that Dwayne from New York is 24; he likes ice fishing, American football and wants to meet a "racially aware woman who must truly believe in the sanctity of family and in the truth of racial superiority". Or perhaps David, an ex-military man from California, appeals. He is upset, reveals Scotland on Sunday, because most women he meets are "race traitors and psycho sluts". Bless their lovesick cottons.

YESTERDAY we reported that while the nation's celebrations for Prince Charles's 50th birthday show no signs of abating, for unemployed musician Ryan Hooper of Roxburghshire, they have been cruelly tarnished. Having told his local job centre that he was to play for the Prince at Buckingham Palace, you may recall, they docked his dole £50. However, reports the Daily Record, on reading of Ryan's plight, Palace press secretary Penny Russell-Smith's heart melted and a cheque for the sum was duly dispatched. "It was really nice of the Palace to get in touch like that," said rocker Ryan, "as I thought I'd never hear from them ever again." Meanwhile a spokeswoman from the Benefits Agency said Ryan was still obliged to declare the cheque to them.



Praying to Mecca under a bust of Palmerston. It's New Labour at work

Jonathan Freedland



WHO says politics is dead? It's certainly alive and well in this room — which is, by now, bubbling with conflict. There are three, maybe four stand-up rows going on at once, each one pitting two of the world's most ancient faiths against each other. "I'll see you on the battlefield, my friend," says a young Muslim man, his voice strong with anger, addressing a Jew roughly his own age. "I might have to take your head off, but for the sake of Islam, I'll do it. I shall fight and fight until I die."

Nearby, a Jew in a skull-cap is explaining the Jewish demand for a homeland to a Muslim student. "You guys always revert to that in the end," says the Muslim. "To what?" asks the Jew. "To Hitler and the Holocaust." Meanwhile, just over his shoulder, there's a loud declaration that "Jihad is life."

All this drama, crammed into a weekday evening in a back room at London University. The occasion is the founding meeting of the Calamus-Maimonides Student Forum, a new group which wants Jews and Muslims, so long at war, to talk to each other face to face. It's an event which has been years in the making, the fruit of secret talks between the two sides whose clashes on campus over recent years have been bitter and even violent. To the untrained eye, this meeting would have looked like more of the same: a failure.

But there were two signs of hope. The first was the treatment of the extremists. It turns out they were from a notorious student faction, Al-Muhajiroun, that aligns itself with the hardest edge of hardline Islam. As soon as they revealed themselves, heckling from the floor, they were turned on and shouted down — not by Jews, but by their fellow Muslims. Moderates from that community quietly made common cause with like-minded Jews: by their very disruption, the militants forged an alliance of the cool-headed. (Last night these moderates met again).

The second encouragement was the presence of a middle-aged man in a suit, neither a Jew nor a Muslim nor a student. He was Derek Fatchett, a junior minister at the Foreign Office. He did not make a speech or a big entrance; he was not there under duress. He simply dropped by.

For Derek Fatchett has made Jewish-Muslim encounters his business. In doing so, he has redefined not just his job but perhaps the very notion of foreign policy. In a few, unheralded actions, Fatchett — whose brief includes the Middle East — is conducting a peace process of his very own. Under his guidance, foreign policy is coming home.

Take last week, when the minister sat down with leaders of Britain's Muslims at the Foreign Office for yet another round of talks, which now take place every six weeks. The likes of Bradford's Sher Azam — a lead player in the Satanic Verses affair — and Ahmed Versi, the editor of the Muslim News, took their usual places in Fatchett's office. They sat, they talked, until the minister suggested a break — for prayers. They turned toward Mecca right then and there, under the busts of Canning and Palmerston. Nothing like this happened under the Conservative government, Fatchett insists with pride. It's his own initiative, "a bit of private enterprise", guided by the belief that foreign policy can no longer be confined to "abroad" — it must take in the diaspora communities that live here in Britain.

So if he meets Netanyahu and Arafat, he'll sit, separately, with British Jews and Muslims. If he deals with Kashmir, he'll meet Indians from Leeds and Pakistanis from Birmingham. He briefs them on the Government's efforts and tells them what he knows, bringing them "into the loop". Muslims are anxious for word on their brethren in Kosovo, Iraq and Palestine, and the soft-spoken Fatchett does his best.

THE aims are clear enough. The minister recognises that Britain is now a multi-racial society, but refuses to accept the conventional wisdom that says race is strictly a matter for the Home Office. He understands that diaspora communities feel a connection to the old country; that, for them, foreign policy is domestic policy. Last week he had a session on Kashmir — with Kashmiris from Pendle.

There's some smart politics here. More than a million and a half Muslims are estimated to live in Britain and, though they may have been once, they are no longer automatic Labour voters. Just as American politicians learned long ago to pander to Cubans in Miami and Jews in New York, so Derek Fatchett — who has both Muslim and Jewish communities in his Leeds constituency — has calculated that international policy can bring domestic votes. But there's idealism, too. The hope is that the diaspora communities might set a lead here which their larger nations will follow. For not only does Fatchett want to improve relations between the Government and these ethnic groups, he wants to see them get on better with each other. The minister hasn't yet brought Jews and Muslims together across a Foreign Office table, but that remains the dream. In the meantime, he's backing a variety of initiatives now underway, from that student encounter to the Alif-Aleph Foundation — an association of Muslim and Jewish business leaders (whose first meeting was a lunch in the boardroom of Marks and Spencer).

The model is the Middle East peace process, whose groundwork was laid in part by meetings of Jews and Palestinians from Europe and America. Even now, no matter how stalled the talks between Netanyahu and Arafat, the process itself is kept up — partly by the ties knitted by the diasporas outside Israel and Palestine. Kashmir's problem, says Fatchett, is that contacts have always been "arid, formal and diplomatic". Instead he wants to construct a cat's cradle of "informal, people-to-people connections" between Indians and Pakistanis here.

And Britain might be just the place. Many of the world's warring peoples have communities living here, and our imperial past means London is still a diplomatic hub. It's a hopeful thought: using the Foreign Office not to run the world, but to bring it just a bit closer together.

Tomorrow six MPs have a chance to make our lives much better

Wish-list for the brave

Polly Toynbee



THE ballot for private members bills takes place tomorrow at 12.30. The moment those top six MPs names are drawn, the winners will be mobbed like feudal kings by petitioners of every kind, desperate to have their causes taken up. This odd little sideshow is one of the curious curlicues of parliamentary proceedure: it's when the government lets MPs out on retractable dog leads, offering an illusion of unaccustomed freedom, but at the snap of a button the beasts are wound back in again. No bill passes without a government fiat.

Knowing the near-impossibility of getting private members bills on to the statute book, most MPs will take up minor, relatively uncontentious matters, hoping for general consent. Some uninspired government lap-dogs will obediently take up a dull little bill offered to them by the whips. Though occasionally a brave soul plunges hell-for-leather for a big one — making maximum noise for something close to their heart. Meanwhile a bunch of Tory yahoos — the most notorious being Eric Forth in gold fob-watch and chain — will try to vote down every single one, on the ideological libertarian grounds that they are against all legislation and regulation: their only chance to land a blow is on defenceless private members bills: with their single cry of "Object!"" harmlessly decent bills fall to this hooligan tendency.

What's around? Off-the-peg bills ready to be thrust into the hands of the lucky six MPs come from all sides: the League Against Cruel Sports will advise against going for fox hunting until the House of Lords is reformed but would urge MPs to try for abolition of deer hunting in the meantime (though why their lordships would be any less sanguinary on this is a mystery).

Stonewall is plugging a bill they refer to as SOD, — a Sexual Orientation Discrimination bill — outlawing sacking for being gay. A large group of MPs would go for free TV licences for the poor and housebound. Friends of the Earth and others have a sheaf of bills: forcing all newspapers to print on recycled paper, insulation for every home and a bill to cut traffic by 10 per cent in 10 years. Age Concern want half-price transport for all pensioners. Sane wants rights for all mental illness sufferers to hospital care. The Consumers Association wants the NHS ombudsman's protection extended to all victims of bad private medical practice.

ABORTION may surface again. The Pro-Choice Alliance, the umbrella lobby of pro-abortion groups, want abortion on request in the first 14 weeks and on the signature of just one doctor up to 24 weeks, with the NHS legally obliged to offer timely abortions for all, (a third of women are now forced to pay privately). SPUC — the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child — are ready to retaliate: "We have a very lively group of MPs," says Anne Widdecombe. She says they'll go for tougher grounds for legal abortion and lower time limits. Or they might try for new anti-euthanasia laws to prevent judges from giving permission for withdrawal of feeding from patients in a persistent vegetative state.

Most successful private members bills are puny measures offering minor changes. But visionary MPs would be better advised to seize the chance to raise some of those myriad subjects hotly discussed in every pub and wine bar up and down the country — but never mentioned in the House of Commons. What about a republican bill to abolish the monarchy? And another to disestablish the Church of England?

A bill to decriminalise cannabis would at least start a rational debate, and might even get a Royal Commission set up to examine the subject soberly. There were some 65,000 arrests last year for possession. In all, nearly 1,000,000 people in Britain have been arrested for this trivial offence. Yet there has been scant debate in the Commons on the colossal waste of time and money, the needless alienation of swathes of the young for possessing a drug far safer than paracetemol.

Teenage pregnancy is high on the government's agenda. What about a bill to put a clinic with a confidential nurse into every school, available to all the young, offering not just free contraception and morning-after pills, but discreet advice on all emotional, health and family problems, entirely independent of teachers? Boots's first clinic for the young opened this week in Glasgow to a front-page blast from the Daily Mail that this wickedness would encourage underage sex. Time to get real: large numbers of the young have unprotected, dangerous sex that destroys too many girls' lives for want of an easy discreet place to turn.

You would guess there must be MPs keenly interested in a privacy bill, and a Press Complaints Commission independent of the newspaper industry. What about a newspaper ownership limitation bill as well? Every other Western nation has laws to limit the amount of media any one company or person can own: time we had an effective one too, and forced Murdoch to divest himself of half his mushrooming empire.



A bill to decriminalise cannabis would at least start a rational and open debate

Most laws are about limiting damage and putting right wrongs. Now we need some bills for the promotion of pure pleasure. Start with more public holidays: there are none in the long stretch from August to christmas, none from Christmas to Easter, fewer than anywhere in Europe. It's time too for a declaration of intent to move towards a four-day week, instead of longer and longer working hours, part of a national leisure plan. With the money we could save by cancelling the Eurofighter — £14 billion — we could build a pleasure dome in every district, offering art, sport, music, dancing and enticing classes to encourage every kind of leisure in an atmosphere far from the environs of colleges too many people find forbidding.

No, of course none of this is going to happen, or not now, not quite yet. But private members bills should be used to lift the eyes of governments and politicians above the mundane, to test the water with ideas that may sound less far fetched once spoken aloud and debated in the chamber. It is the one chance MPs get to break the chains of official party policy and express their individual visions. Speak up now, whoever you lucky six may be. Give us something brave.

Russians, Turks, Jews, Maltese, Jamaicans . . . immigrants still take the blame for much of our crime

Damned foreigners

Duncan Campbell

ONE of Scotland Yard's most colourful detectives operating in the early part of the century was Fred "Nutty" Sharpe. When he wrote his memoirs in 1938 he recalled the "flocks of aliens" arriving at the turn of the century in London: "Russians in top-boots and leather leggings and little round fur hats, wild-looking people from the most outlandish parts of that great uncivilised land, a lot were desperadoes and went in for crime straightaway."

This week, a headline in the Daily Mail on the Brutal Crimes of the Asylum Seekers follows a recent series in the Evening Standard on the same theme. The British Transport Police have also this week warned about gangs of Bosnian pickpockets on the London underground. Earlier this year, Turks in London were said by police to be responsible for 80 per cent of UK heroin traffic.

It would seem as though Nutty's warnings about the dangers of aliens had gone unheeded. And there is a long history of Britain perceiving herself to be in the grip of foreign criminals.

At the turn of the century, it was the Russians. By the end of the first world war, a new villain had emerged: the Chinese opium seller, who as World Pictorial News reported, preyed on white women who did not have "sufficient decency and pride of race" to turn down the men with "lips thin and cruel, tightly drawn across even yellow teeth".

By 1929, an expose of criminality in London, Crooks Of The Underworld, referred to managers of night clubs who "being of Jewish persuasion" advised how to carry out insurance frauds: "Jewish lightning" was the slang term for arson.

The 30s and the boom in prostitution brought the Maltese or the "Epsom Salts" to the fore. They were seen as the main purveyors of vice and corruptors of the British in the austere inter-war years.

In 1957, the Times warned editorially about the dangers for "white girls who become friendly with West Indians . . . enticed to hemp smoking . . . The potential moral danger is significant since a principal motive of the coloured man in smoking hemp is to stimulate his sexual desire".

> It would seem that Nutty's warning about the aliens went unheeded

By the 60s, the Chinese were back on the map of villainy again, associated with the growth of the illegal heroin market, a role they have since passed, first to the Pakistanis and now the Turks.

In the meantime, the Jamaicans, the Colombians and the the Nigerians had arrived as exporters by appointment to the underworld and the Russians (this time minus the leggings and the little round fur hats) had emerged again.

So does this tell us that we lived in a Garden of Eden here until the foreign serpent arrived and started scrumping our apples?

Of course, many of the immigrant groups mentioned above had their bands of desperadoes. One of the reasons for this was that any new group of immigrants, be they asylum seekers or refugees, are likely to find themselves excluded from the mainstream.

One way round this exclusion, as the Italians discovered so spectacularly in the United States, was the illegal way. A different language and a natural immigrant solidarity meant that they could operate for long enough to avoid detection, invest and move into legitimate business. What received less notice was that the vast majority of the immigrants quietly got on with life as waiters, cleaners, nurses, busdrivers and, now, minicab drivers.

Some asylum-seekers have been involved in horrible crimes and it is right that they should be arrested and punished for them, but they represent a tiny number of the people arriving here over the past few months.

Much has changed in Britain since Nutty saw the Ruskies arriving at Irongate Wharf on the Thames but some things have remained fairly constant. Our murderers and rapists, our paedophiles and fraudsters, our wife-beaters and road-ragers still remain, almost universally, of good, solid Anglo-Saxon stock.

هكذا من الاصل

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'The return of Pinochet [to Chile] would do the least harm to the chances of democratic progress'
Eric Hobsbawm, Letters

Missed tricks in Europe

Labour must show warmth

IN THEIR European dealings British ministers seem unable to avoid sub-Churchillian bluster. Gordon Brown included. It's as if a quick look at the Lady's Bruges speech were still the best briefing for a Brussels visit. We will fight them on the (fiscal) beaches; we will protect forever the sovereignty of Parliament — even though we think it a feudal anachronism in dire need of reconstruction. Before he went to Ecofin, the regular meeting of finance ministers, Gordon Brown yesterday seemed far less sure than when he defends his domestic economic policies. Perhaps a jaunty Saarlander has seen to that.

Oskar Lafontaine is the wild child of European politics who has given a filip to the Eurosceptic press. But it's not Lafontaine who is the problem, or even the proposals for tax harmonisation (to which the British contribution yesterday was support for postponing the abolition of duty-free sales within the EU). So much for freer trade. But that speaks to the ambiguities of Blairite Euro policy. Lately spin control doesn't seem to have been working. There's inattentiveness in the failure to anticipate Bonn's new noises and the public exposition of fiscal thinking in the Commission.

Blairite engagement with Europe began with those *de haut en bas* lectures on the superiorities of the Anglo-liberal (third) way followed, this spring, by signs of detailed but humbler involvement. The advent of Gerhard Schröder — a victory which has taken less than two months to dim — led to talk of social democratic alliances and new impetus to cooperation. Meanwhile the European Union's "domestic" agenda — budgetary reforms, accession of the former east block — has offered all sorts of opportunities for intellectual and policy leadership not at all dependent on British participation in the common currency. Anxiety within the Franco-German relationship (part ideological, part strategic, part plain old national interest) has given Britain the chance to display clever footwork on and off the ball.

It's not happening. And meanwhile the great work of cajoling, influencing, educating the British public in its best long-run interests has been neglected. The half-truths and exaggerations of Euroscepticism worst excesses have gone unchallenged, presumably for the sake of higher alliances between Prime Minister and media magnates. Instead of robust counter-arguments (pointing out that rhetorical excess is an old Euro feature and Lafontaine's plans have yet to pass the Bundestag let alone enter serious Euro-negotiations) Europe becomes an embarrassment. Never celebration. And so, this week, the Government pays the price. There are various responses to Oskar Lafontaine, one of which is laughter. We also need to distinguish clearly, as do Mario Monti and Commissioner de Silguy, between fiscal reform as part of the single market project and tax harmonisation as some inevitable consequence of the euro. Tax harmonisation is not the same as uniformity in tax rates, either. The constant British assumption that it's us and a solid phalanx of them is a bad basis for diplomacy. It is not just the Spanish who find labour market reform an attractive option. Clever repartee directed at Herr Lafontaine might welcome his conversion to the cause of (income) tax cutting. It's partly a matter of tone. Some day, on their own timetable, Chancellor, Prime Minister and colleagues will be leading a campaign to convince British people to vote yes in a referendum on joining the single currency. Hostility towards Europe is not to be underestimated (as this week's British Social Attitudes survey reminds us). And there are still very serious worries about the economic effects of the euro. But objections are not going to ease of their own accord. More warmth and projection now would be a good way of putting in match practice.

Downsizing poets

Oxford's ode to Philistinism

"Poetry, which is in Oxford made/ An art, in London is only a trade". What may have been fact in Dryden's day is, sadly, true no more. Trade has taken over the dreaming spires and poetry has joined the lost causes, passed its sell-by-date. The decision of the Oxford University Press to close its poetry list — a move endorsed by a committee of dons — has sullied the image of the whole university. A week after the decision it has become a public relations disaster out of all proportion to the paltry sums involved. The OUP is coy about figures but it is believed that the turnover of the list was between £28,000 and £50,000.

This compares with last night's Turner prize of £20,000 and estimates of up to £6 million for the profit that the OUP as a whole makes for the university. The list wasn't even losing money. According to the OUP it was "barely covering its costs". Oh dear. Goodness knows what would have happened to the early Shakepeare or the emerging Marlowe if the OUP had found they too weren't making "a reasonable dividend to go back to the original owners, the university". There's no such thing, it seems, as free verse, everything must contribute to the university's purse.

It has been argued that closure doesn't matter because of the list's low turnover. Who, after all, would miss a few poets? But lowish sales were a reflection of the OUP's lack of commitment as much as anything (though not that of its respected part-time poetry editor, Jacqueline Simms). Many of the OUP's poets — names like Fleur Adcock, D J Enright, Jo Shapcott and Peter Porter — may have little difficulty finding another publisher but that's not the point. As Ms Shapcott noted, if Manchester United were to close down, its players would find other jobs — but there would be one less place for budding recruits to make their way.

Poetry's status as the new rock 'n' roll may have been exaggerated. Poetry books rarely become best sellers apart from a Heaney, a Hughes or the admirable Poems on the Underground. But people are reading, writing or listening to poems — whether in their newspapers, pubs, festivals or on the radio — in increasing numbers. Poetry is a creative artery that needs constant stimulation. If Oxford can only see it as something that McKinseys need to do market testing on, rather than part of the idea of a university, then something will have gone that may never come back. A thing of beauty is a joy forever, even when there is a little red ink on the bottom line.

Quebec's enigma

Voters vote for a new vote

C'EST magnifique, mais ce n'est pas l'indépendance. Lucien Bouchard's Parti Québécois did itself proud in the last weeks of the province's election campaign by upsetting strong poll showings for the opposition and squeaking home to victory. Though the PQ's margin is slightly down, it commands a healthy enough majority of seats for a full term. Victory came from its leader's energetic campaign as well as his opponent's blunders in threatening to cut welfare benefits and the state payroll on which many Québécois still rely.

The PQ has been many things in the last 30 years. From the social-democratic leanings of its charismatic first leader, Rene Levesque, to the centre-right philosophy of Lucien Bouchard, it has travelled a zig-zag path. But the constant factor has been its determination to preserve the French language and Quebec's separate culture in an increasingly Americanised world. Quebec is closer to the belly of the beast, as M Bouchard with his American wife well knows. As in Scotland, the Basque country, or Bavaria, the desire for regional sovereignty and local control as a reaction to homogenisation and distant decision-making is neither reactionary nor necessarily destructive.

In his softly-softly approach M Bouchard, who advocates "sovereignty-partnership", was helped recently by Canada's Supreme Court. Although its verdict was that Quebec could not secede unilaterally, it ruled that the federal government must negotiate in good faith if a clear majority in Quebec voted for independence in a referendum. This destroyed the Federalists' case that a Yes vote would bring chaos.

M Bouchard's re-election now gives him the platform to advance to another referendum at the best moment of his choosing. But he has no guarantee even then of a majority. In total votes the PQ lost to the Liberals yesterday, who oppose independence. Many who voted for the PQ like its good government, but not its aspirations to sovereignty. Le jeu n'est pas fini.

Letters to the Editor

Some minor disputes

JULIE Flint accuses me (Turkish delight, December 1) of "mistruths" in my article on the extradition of the PKK leader, Ocalan (The other extradition, November 28). She does not cite any, and so I have no case to answer. Miss Flint, however, does. If the grievances of Kurds in central and western Turkey are as bad as she claims, why do these millions not vote for HADEP, the party identified with these grievances? I do not write this in any anti-Kurdish spirit, quite the contrary. I would just like to know the answer.
Norman Stone.
Oxford.

I SUPPOSE I should be glad that my elderly motor car is able to run on unleaded petrol instead of the soon-to-be-banned 4-star for which its engine was designed. (Warning over old bangers' fuel, November 19). Unfortunately, without a catalytic converter, my vehicle will belch highly carcinogenic benzene (used in unleaded petrol to substitute for lead) into the atmosphere whenever I use it. The problem of benzene release is not limited to older vehicles run on unleaded fuel — catalytic converters, designed for conditions in California, are not very effective at removing benzene in climates like that of UK. It seems strange to try to reduce the likelihood of brain damage in children by increasing the risk of cancer to the general population.
Neil Hearne.
London

I SINCERELY hope that Joy Shapcock's collection does win the T S Eliot prize, as Dan Glaister hints (Prosaic business of putting price on poetry, December 1). It will finally prove her superiority over that arch rival Jo Shapcott.
Ted Slade.
New Malden, Surrey.

On the spot in Santiago

NOW that the Lords have established that, henceforth torture can under no circumstances form part of the functions of any government, the immediate issue about General Pinochet is not what would satisfy men and women on the British left (The general gets his orders, December 1). It is what would be best for a still endangered democracy in Chile.

The regretful but considered view among leaders of the Chilean left, including survivors who were in office in 1970-73 is that the return of an inevitably discredited and humiliated Pinochet would do the least harm to the chances of democratic progress in their country. This is also the view expressed to me by a very authoritative democratic figure in neighbouring Argentina. May I add that I have just returned from Santiago where, sitting beside President Allende's widow, I had the luck to see with what joy the televised judgment of the Law Lords was received.
Eric Hobsbawm.
London.

I AM a survivor of Pol Pot's regime. Earlier this year, there was a glimpse of a hope that he would be brought to trial in either a US or a Canadian court. And it was no other than the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright who spearheaded the effort to extradite him from Cambodia. Ironic then that she is now putting her government's weight behind those opposing a similar extradition.

There are other key perpetrators of the Cambodian genocide who have not yet been brought to justice. Ieng Sary, for example, who was Pol Pot's comrade-in-crime for nearly three decades, was given an amnesty a couple of years ago on grounds of "national reconciliation".

I know only too well the profound dismay and powerlessness when an opportunity such as this is allowed to pass.
Marith Pen.
University of Greenwich.

I LOST virtually my whole family in the holocaust. For me, the critical issue — one purely of justice — is whether, had Adolf Hitler survived the war, he could have been prosecuted for the slaughter of millions of defenceless people.

Surely no one would have argued at the time that such a prosecution would have been illegal because Hitler had been head of state when these atrocities were committed, and it is unthinkable that such an argument should prevail in Pinochet's case.

The precedent set by a decision not to extradite him would, in effect, legalise genocide.
Leslie Baruch Brent.
London.

A touch of class for Britain's new social order

CERTAINLY, Polly Toynbee's question: "Can you have an ideology of freedom and equality when everywhere we are sucked back into an image of serfdom?" is of relevance to Britain in the nineties (We're all middle class now, November 30). However, a concept of the middle class so broad as to embrace both senior executives and clerical workers tells us nothing about real socio-economic trends; it merely alienates non-manual workers from their manual counterparts.

There is an alternative: Marx saw class in terms of the relationship of the worker to the ownership of production. This brings into sharper focus the major socio-economic trend of the eighties and nineties: the transfer of wealth from the majority who have to earn a wage to the tiny élite who own the means of production. For Marx, ideology was "false consciousness": freedom and equality leading to classlessness under capitalism is ideology indeed.
Mike Diboll.
London.

THE Economist's World In Figures puts 71 per cent of the UK's GDP, and 78 per cent of its employment, in "services". So why does the new social order (Teachers get more class in social shake-up, December 1) find no place for consultants in management, marketing, media, financial services, design, advertising, promotion, personnel and recruitment, training, accountancy, fashion, local or national government and politics, or any branch of the arts apart from actors and musicians ("lower managerial and professional?"). Depending on the basis of their employment, this massive range of people could fall into the top bracket (company directors) or the fourth division (small employers and own account workers).

Given the modern tendency towards frequent career change, and the rapid decline of any pattern in background, earnings or job security across the whole employment scale, is there any point in this exercise?
David Davies.
Salford.



Tell that to the fundamentalists

SO PETER Tatchell reckons he is to the gay movement what Martin Luther King was to black civil rights. (Tatchell invokes Ghandi in court, December 1). Telephone calls to newspapers to "out" people and a short sprint up a church pulpit (where coincidentally there were some television cameras) are hardly in the Ghandi or suffragettes' mould.

Martyrs are people like St Paul, Joan of Arc and Bobby Sands. People who really believed in their cause and who challenged real opposition. If Tatchell really believes in what he says then, rather than knocking an old man aside in the holy sanctuary (at least the Church of England allow open debate on homosexuality), why doesn't he wander over to Speakers' Corner on a Sunday afternoon and challenge the Islamic fundamentalists? But then that's what separates true martyrs from self-publicists.
Rev Kenneth G Walton.
Blackburn.

This sounds like a rip-off

WE ARE a small independent record label. CDs leave us for our distributors at £5.49, out of which we have to pay all manufacturing, recording and marketing costs, royalties to the artists and songwriters and take the risk (Shoppers caught in prices crossfire, November 28).

Recently, one of our bands sold out a concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, thus delivering nearly 1,000 potential customers to the South Bank's record shop Farringdon's (part of Virgin/Our Price). That shop took stocks of the band's CDs from our distributor at £7.85 and sold them at £14.99. This includes a £4.90 (62 per cent) mark up, and £2.24 in VAT. Our complaints that this was far too big a profit margin, especially since all stocks were taken by Farringdon's at no risk on a sale-or-return basis, were ignored.

The record company and the artists are blamed for high CD prices because their name is on it. Any OFT investigation should look at the other end of the supply chain.
Ian Anderson.
Rogue Productions/Sakay.

Lessons for Africa from my wife's senseless death

YOU have highlighted the discrepancy between the West and the developing world in survival rates for people with Aids (Aids "wiping out economic gains", November 25). Well, I am HIV positive and picked up my infection in Botswana from my wife, who tragically was in the wrong place at the wrong time to benefit from the new drugs.

However, as a British citizen at least I have the chance to stay healthy. My wife was very highly qualified, someone her country could not afford to lose. It hurts to think that if she had been a British citizen and living in the UK she would still be alive today.

Botswana, which tops the world HIV statistics with over 20 per cent of the population infected, and possibly over 40 per cent in the 20 to 45 age group, is not a typical poor African country. It may top this unfortunate table but it is also the one country in Africa that could afford to treat its infected population, and yet has not chosen to do so. It has several billion US dollars in reserve which it is saving for the proverbial rainy day. Surely that rainy day has arrived, and maybe some international pressure has to be put on Botswana.

The country can be the shining beacon of Africa, if it can just see that its people's good health is as important as its other priorities, such as spending on arms. It must start to make a plan with WHO and the drug companies to make its people better, more hopeful and therefore more productive.
Name and address supplied.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used. Please provide a reference to the relevant article.

Will you give Mary a bed this Christmas?



At 16, Mary ran away from a life of abuse. Today she is homeless. Could you sleep easy on Christmas Eve knowing she was shivering in a bus shelter?

You can help keep Mary, and thousands of vulnerable people like her, safe and warm over Christmas. With £25 from you, Crisis can provide a warm bed, hot meals, clean clothes and someone to talk to at one of our shelters.

As the days count down to Christmas, nearly 10,000 homeless people are counting on Crisis. We're counting on you. Our service depends on public donations. So please send your £25 today – in time to help us buy the bedding, food and clothes we need to bring Mary in from the cold.

Countdown to Christmas

Yes, I'll keep homeless people warm:

☐ £15 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £250* other £____

I enclose a cheque made payable to Crisis. OR debit my:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Switch† other ____

Card no. / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

†Last three digits of Switch card no. ___ Switch issue no. ___

Expiry date ___ Signature ____

* Gifts of £250 or more are worth almost a third extra to us under Gift Aid

Name (caps) Mr/Mrs/Ms ____

Address ____

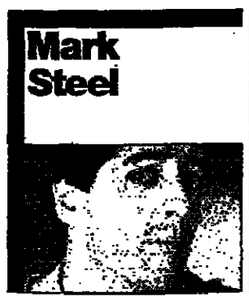
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Straw man



SO THERE'S another argument for not taking out private health insurance. You could go in to have your tonsils out, wake up afterwards and find yourself lying next to a military dictator.

Apparently, he was a fussy patient who, according to staff, "enjoyed a good moan". How did the nurses deal with that? "Oh dear, we are a grumpy old torturer today, aren't we? Well get this soup down you and we'll have you back at those cattle prods in no time".

Now the hospital has kicked him out. So maybe the consultants will start to disappear, and the Conservative Party will say that you couldn't blame him for murdering the chief surgeon, as the hospital's accounts were in a terrible state.

That would be no more ludicrous than Norman Lamont on Newsnight, saying that it was time the matter was "laid to rest". His argument was that, whatever's happened, to continue raking over bygone events with legal wrangling makes matters worse. Which must mean he supports the abolition of all laws. All these years and he's never let on that he's a militant anarchist. Perhaps that's why he threw ten billion quid away on Black Monday. It was a plot to rid the country of money, which binds the common person to material possessions and stops us thinking for ourselves. The argument of Pinochet's lawyers has been even more stimulating. If the extradition goes through, they ask, does that mean next time P W Botha or Baby Doc Duvalier goes abroad, that they should be arrested as well? What a splendid idea! It goes to show, just because you're a right-wing thug doesn't mean you can't have the odd spark of inspiration.

The case for trying him in Chile was explained by a "senior source", quoted in The Observer. Chileans would "make a point of giving him a proper trial", he said, so that they could "prove themselves" before the world. Pinochet supporters, as we know, are extremely sensitive to public relations. They're just easily misunderstood. It seems that, in Chilean custom, it's a mark of great respect to attack a BBC camera crew.

Also, if the Chilean government really wanted to put Pinochet on trial, why have they never managed it before? Too busy, I suppose. Jose Miguel Insulza, the Chilean minister battling for this settlement, must be saying to Jack Straw: "Honestly, we meant to get round to it but it's been like a madhouse in Chile, it really has."

So if he does stand trial in his home country, he's not likely to face that rigorous a grilling. "General, where were you on the night of the coup"?

"I was out."

"Well that wraps it up for me."

The idea that Chileans are the best people to try someone for crimes against Chileans is odd, as it assumes that all Chileans have a common interest. Surely it depends on which Chileans are to do the trying. A clue as to which section of Chilean society would try Pinochet in his own country, comes from the following observation. In general, poor Chileans are demanding his extradition to Spain, while rich Chileans were preparing to celebrate his return to Chile with champagne. Another clue is that one influential group amongst rich Chileans demanding his return, is called "The Pinochet Foundation".

SINCE the law lords' decision, the case for extraditing Pinochet has become more painfully overwhelming than before. And yet an article in this paper made perfect sense when it began "Jack Straw is beginning the most uncomfortable two weeks of his political life". How can that be? For millions of people from his generation, if they had the power to determine whether Pinochet went home or on trial, it would be the most comfortable two minutes of any part of their life. Following the coup, if Straw had been told that one day a decision on the dictator's extradition would be down to him, he'd have leaped with joy. But 20 years of being realistic leaves him finding the decision the most uncomfortable of his life. It's like sinking into depression because you've won the Lottery, and can't decide whether or not to collect the money. And then saying to Camelot "As it's such a tough one, could I have an extra week to decide?"

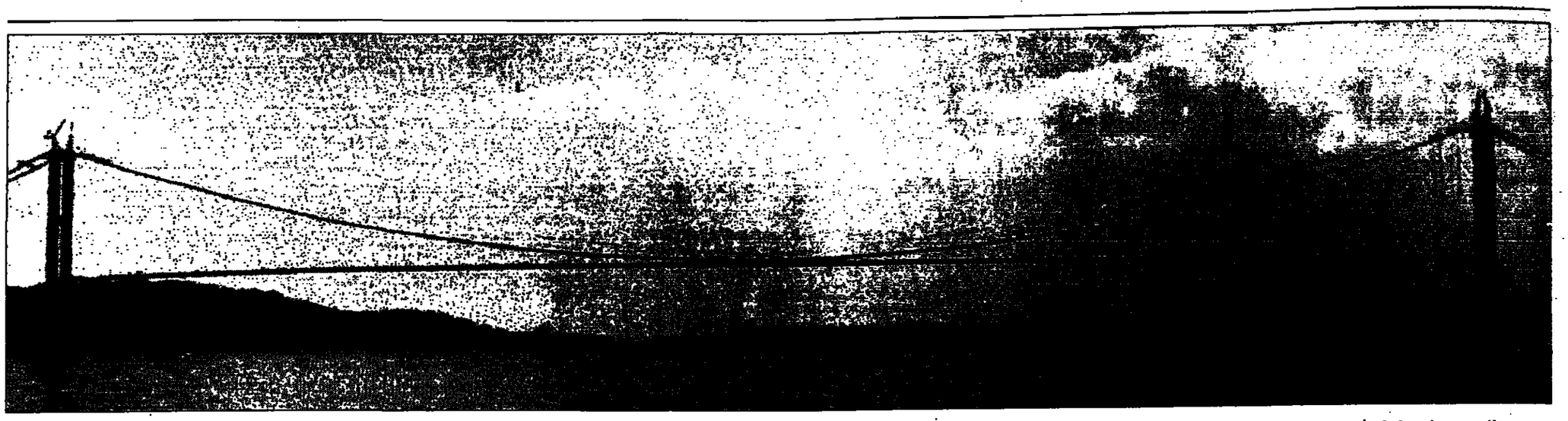
Pinochet's lucky that he only overthrew a government and murdered his opponents. If Straw had caught him skinning up a spliff, he'd have been in Bow Street Court the same afternoon.

Straw seems desperate to find a compromise, which could be presented as not letting the General off, but not agreeing to everything demanded by the Spanish judge. So here's a suggestion. Pinochet should be extradited to Spain, but on the condition that he's kept in the filthiest, most rat-infested cell in the land, which he shares with a 7ft Basque ex-wrestler who greets him with "Buenos dias, senõr. I say, I do like a military man with a moustache."

Analysis
Turkey



Toynbee calls for stately pleasure domes
8



Bridge over troubled waters

The Bosphorus crossing links Europe and Asia, yet despite their geopolitical importance and long membership of Nato, the Turks batter in vain on Europe's door. **Stephen Bates** and **Martin Walker** ask whether they deserve ostracism from the Brussels club.

IT'S ironic that Vienna of all places should be where next week Europe's heads of government meet to discuss their worsening relations with Turkey. Ever since the Turks first laid siege to the city in 1529 there has been a legacy of misunderstanding, mistrust and mutual incomprehension between them and western Europeans. The choice of Vienna is accidental, to do with Austria's presidency of the European Union but it's apposite: this has been one of the most difficult years for the European-Turkish relationship (a figure of speech which history makes deeply problematical — does Asia really begin over the Bosphorus?).

Following the Turkish government's exasperated decision to end its attempt to join the EU earlier this year after constant rebuffs, a trade war is now threatened over Italy's refusal to extradite the Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan. Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, said last week that the EU would stand solid with Italy if Ankara imposed sanctions. Brussels emphasised that not all EU member states necessarily regard Ocalan as a terrorist though his PKK organisation has killed thousands of civilians during a violent 20-year campaign. The Europeans cannot understand why Turkey should so misconstrue their reluctance to hand over Ocalan without due process of law to a regime which would so like to hang him high (although the death penalty has not been used in Turkey since 1984). And for their part Turks cannot understand why the EU should spurn them in this matter as in their bid to join the European club.

'Twas ever thus. In the dictionary of quotations from Shakespeare to Mozart, Dickens to Gladstone and Lloyd George, the Turks get insulting citations. From Lawrence of Arabia, allegedly raped in the desert, to the movie Midnight Express and the fugitive financier Azil Nadir, a contemptuous image has built up around a nation whose people are otherwise acknowledged to be both cultivated and friendly, living in a country with a long and civilised past and an economically dynamic and western-orientated present.

Consult any of the taxi drivers of many of Europe's cities (those who are not themselves Turkish that is) and you will be regaled with hostility to immigrants, all lumped together as Turks or, more insulting still, "shish kebabs". Turkey has been waiting to join the European Union now for nearly 40 years and, for all many Europeans care, could wait another 40. It joined the queue in 1959, way before Britain, but, following a decision at the Luxembourg summit this time last year, it has been placed effectively last. It looks as if it will not get in until after Romania and Bulgaria — countries with much less secure economic and political bases — well into the next millennium.

This is despite Turkey's important strategic position, now no less than in the cold war, controlling water supply to neighbours such as Syria and potentially commanding the likely pipeline routes for the world's next great untapped oil fields in Azerbaijan. Turkey's problem was that its latest bid to join the EU follows the end of the Cold War. As President Suleyman Demirel remarked bitterly: "When the defence of European civilisation [against communism] was at stake, they didn't say we were Turks and Muslims."

The EC concedes the country is well on the way to qualifying for admission on economic grounds: "Turkey has all the hallmarks of a market economy, possessing a well-developed institutional and legislative framework, a dynamic private sector and liberal trade rules. The economy has considerable potential for growth and has shown great adaptability which has contributed significantly to its modernisation"(1).

Although per capita GDP is only a third of the EU average and inflation was nearing 70 per cent last year, Turkey is growing fast: exports have risen by more than 20 per cent since 1995 and half now go to Europe. Agriculture's share of GNP, a key transitional indicator, is down to 14 per cent. This is despite a loss of trade averaging $7 billion a year since links to Iraq were cut after the Gulf war. Cutting off the Iraqi oil pipeline alone has cost Turkey $27 billion since 1991 and a third of its 300,000-strong lorry fleet has had to find alternative work. As a senior EU diplomat remarked: "Turkey has proved a reliable ally internationally. It has adhered to United Nations sanctions despite the cost. It is the world's only real Muslim democracy. It has a large and stable middle class. It is a consumer society. It would be a glittering prize for the EU."

Turkey's participation in Nato — it has the second largest army in the alliance — and its pivotal location athwart the Soviet Black Sea fleet's only exit to open seas, explains the long indulgence the country enjoyed throughout the cold war. America's subsequent devotion is based on Turkey's pivotal position in the Middle East, perfectly placed to dominate the eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia. It can launch air strikes and patrols against Iraq, and provide pipeline routes for oil from the Caspian basin that will not have to use the Russian pipeline monopoly. The discreet military co-operation between Turkey and Israel, with joint exercises and freedom to train in Turkish airspace is a second bonus for Washington.

THERE'S a further factor and it's one that Richard Perle, former assistant secretary at the Pentagon, suggests may be the most important of all at a time of American worries about Islamic fundamentalism. "Turkey is a country where most people subscribe to the Islamic faith, but it is a secular state, allied and strategically oriented to the West, with elected civilian governments, democratic procedures, an independent judiciary, free markets and a free press.

"This makes Turkey virtually unique in the Islamic world, and offers an important alternative model of pro-Western democracy to the growing numbers of Arabs who suspect that their countries do not have to be run in the way they have been"(2).

Turkey's long wait was not eased when last year Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, chose a meeting of Christian Democrat leaders in Brussels to announce firmly that as far as he was concerned Turkey could never join the EU. "Turkish membership of the EU is not possible"(3). What he was really worried about was immigration. There are an estimated 2 million Turks living in the EU (out of its population of 11 million Muslims), compared with only 180,000 who have made their homes in the Arab world. One worker in four in the German car industry is Turkish. They have not been made welcome, although there are signs that the new German government is more prepared to look at offering citizenship to some of its Turkish residents. But they have not been a particular burden on social security systems, as recent Belgian figures show.

Only last week Austria's foreign minister Wolfgang Schüssel was telling the European Parliament that no promise could be made — yet as a recent book notes, Turkish workers are "apparently thought good enough to clean the floors in the Commission buildings in Brussels".

Greece too remains implacably opposed to Turkish EU membership, to such an extent that it may block all enlargement if there is an accommodation with the Turks over Cyprus. It has already done its best to stymie EU aid to its old rival, in contravention of the customs agreement signed three years ago. Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus has given Greece an incentive to oppose Turkish accession; the prospect of (Greek) southern Cyprus joining gives the EU its most knotty single problem.

The Americans and their Nato allies in northern Europe used to be confident that Greek-Turkish strains could be kept under control. In 1990, when the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty formally ended the cold war, the numbers of tanks and guns on Nato's central front had to be slashed by 40 per cent. Nato shipped almost the lot to Greece and Turkey, just as the Balkan wars to their north got under way, on the grounds that this would be cheaper than scrapping them. That weapons to be scrapped to seal the peace in central Europe were being shipped to the fringes of a real war zone in the Balkans was an irony lost on the Nato planners.

THE articulation of Turkish interests isn't helped by endemic political instability. (Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz lost office last week.) With a track record of three coups in the 20 years before 1980 and a strong presence in politics since, the country's armed forces stand ready to intervene again. Only this week the general staff warned politicians to take care. Non-religious parties are strong but unable to coalesce, leaving a gap for Muslim fundamentalism. Observers see recent support for Islamic parties as more of a protest than evidence of religious conversion, a strike against the personal enmities and instability which brought down the coalition government. None of this helps Turkey in presenting a coherent line to the outside world.

The country, for all its desire for European acceptance, has been slow to acknowledge or appreciate genuine concerns, particularly over human and social rights. Its underpaid, corrupt, unaccountable and sometimes brutal police force has, according to EU sources, proved much more effective than Turkey's suave diplomatic service and millions spent on public relations in promoting a certain picture of the country abroad.

It is Turkey's human rights record that gives the EU every opportunity to block membership. The recent EC report was scathing: "The actual upholding of civil and political rights enshrined in the Turkish constitution and law remains problematic. Cases of torture, disappearances and extra-judicial executions are recorded regularly. Freedom of expression is not fully assured and is subject to numerous restrictions . . . many of the cases put into question the effective control and supervision of the security forces."

It is the reverse side of the great westernisation process inaugurated by Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey in the 1920s. He may have pledged the state to a secular, western future, but he also left a legacy of intolerance of dissent and authoritarianism. Although civilian politicians say they are committed to improving human rights (and headlines in last week's Turkish press over the Ocalan row were promising: "Don't worry — we won't hang him!") the legacy of distrust remains. It won't go away in Vienna.

Sources: (1) European Commission, Regular Report on Turkey's progress towards accession, November 1998; (2) Institute of Strategic Studies conference, Toronto, May 1998; (3) Minutes of European People's Party meeting, Val Duchesse, Brussels, March 4, 1997; see also Nicole and Hugh Pope, Turkey Unveiled, Murray 1997 and James Pettifer, The Turkish Labyrinth, Penguin 1997.

Stephen Bates is the Guardian's European affairs editor and Martin Walker is Europe editor.

Atatürk and after



1914 Ottoman empire allied with Axis Powers - enters First World War. Conflict in Palestine, Arabia and Gallipoli.
October, 1918 Defeated, signs Mudros Armistice.
November, 1918 Anatolia occupied by Allies. Dismemberment of empire.
1919-1923 Post war occupation and war of independence. Emergence of army general, Mustafa Kemal Pasha as leader of National Assembly.
July, 1923 Lausanne Treaty gives new Turkish State independence.
October, 1923 occupation of Istanbul by Allies ends.
1923-38 Kemal presidency.
1924 Caliphate abolished.
1934 Kemal receives honourary title Atatürk, "father of the Turks".
1938 Atatürk dies.
1939-45 Turkey neutral during second world war, joins Allies in 1945.
1945 Multi-party system introduced. US gives economic aid. Turkey becomes military bridgehead.
1952 Joins Nato.
1955 Conflict with Greece over Cyprus and outbreak of violence in Nicosia.
1961 Becomes associate member of European Economic Community.
1970 Demonstrations and violence.
1974 Turkish troops occupy northern Cyprus.
1980 Military coup.
1983 Turgut Özal elected prime minister.
1989 Özal becomes president.
1991 Civilian rule restored. Özal continues as president.
1994 Fighting with PKK over Kurdish independence.
1993 Tansu Ciller becomes first woman prime minister.
1995 Islamist Welfare Party becomes largest party in National Assembly.
1996 Secular True Path Party and Welfare Party form coalition government.
1998 The Welfare Party is outlawed by the constitutional court.

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Netherlands	Fl	265	465	855
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Shell calls off fire sale, page 12

Prescott pays up for death of coal, page 12

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239 9610
Fax: 0171-833 4456

FinanceGuardian

Jobs lost after empty takeover promises

Courtaulds to sack 1,200

Julia Finch

COURTAULDS Textiles, a leading supplier to Marks & Spencer, is to axe more than 1,200 jobs at its Claremont Garments subsidiary just two months after it bought the firm and promised workers the takeover would strengthen the business.

Eight Claremont factories, from Portsmouth to Tyneside, are to be closed down with the loss of 1,125 jobs, and a further 95 head office redundancies are planned. The cuts mean that one in four of Claremont's workforce are to lose their jobs.

Courtaulds Textiles chief executive Colin Dyer said the redundancies would generate "increased flexibility and cost effectiveness" and were "essential to ensure that we remain competitive in the international, fast-moving clothing business".

But a spokesman for the GMB general union said it was appalled at the shutdowns. National Officer Des Farrell accused Courtaulds Textiles of asset-stripping and demanded a Government inquiry.

Courtaulds bought Claremont, which is also a major supplier to Marks & Spencer, for £10 million in September. Until 1995 it had been regarded as a star performer, but a series of acquisitions left it nursing losses. In June the company announced it would focus entirely on supplying M&S and the firm's links with the retailer were one of its big attractions to Courtaulds.

The sites now scheduled for closure include six lingerie factories in Giltbrook and Sandiacre, Nottinghamshire; Portsmouth, Hampshire; Shoreham-by-Sea in Sussex; Woodville in Derbyshire and Newton Aycliffe in Durham. In addition a casual wear factory in South Shields and a formal wear factory in Stanley, Durham, will also be closed. More than 570 of the job losses will be concentrated in the North-East.

The Claremont job losses come as the UK textiles industry is facing increased demands from retailers to cut their costs or lose business.

Marks & Spencer, which has always boasted about the large proportion of its clothing sourced in the UK, is among those retailers demanding better prices, even if that means moving production abroad. Last month the retailer announced a 23 per cent profit slump and pledged to improve its selling prices.

Many UK companies, including Courtaulds Textiles, are shifting production to cheap labour countries such as Mexico and Morocco, although the company yesterday stressed that it was "committed to maintaining a well-invested, profitable manufacturing base in the UK".

Details of the Claremont job losses came just a week after rival Dewhirst Clothing confirmed it was axing 600 jobs by closing factories in Cleveland and Stoke-on-Trent.

Other textile companies have issued a series of profit warnings and the British Clothing Industry Association has called the current situation facing the textile industry as the worst in living memory. The Transport and General Workers Union says there have been 25,000 job losses in the industry this year.

The Bank of England last night defended its policy of setting interest rates to conquer inflation, rather than promote growth and employment.

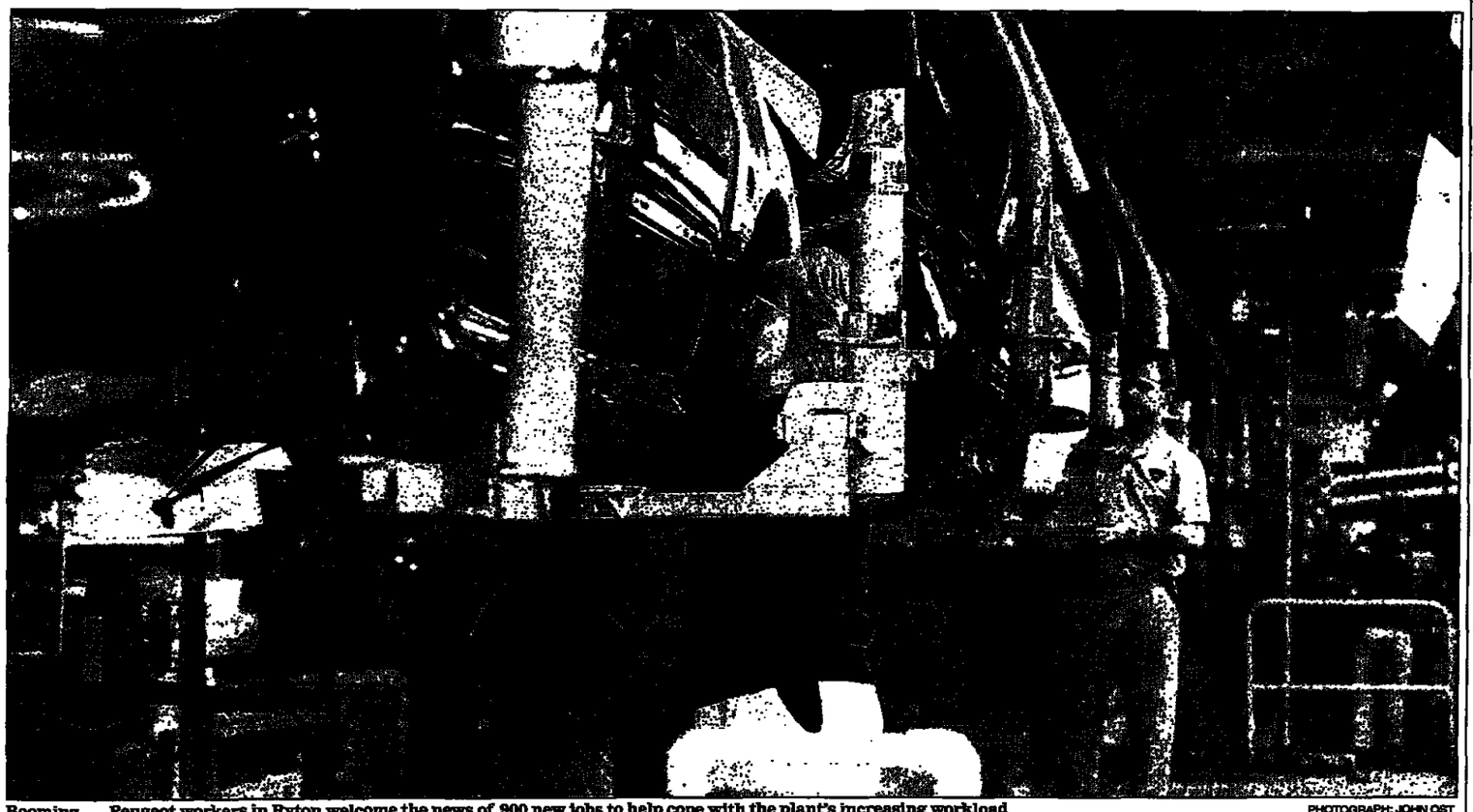
Deputy governor Mervyn King said: "Monetary policy cannot influence levels of employment in the long run." He rejected calls by the German finance minister Oskar Lafontaine for European monetary policy to promote growth and employment.



Redundancy notice ... Claremont Garments in South Shields is one of eight Courtauld Textiles' plants to go to the wall

'Companies are shifting production to cheap labour countries'

Jobs gained as changing lifestyles exploited



Booming ... Peugeot workers in Ryton welcome the news of 900 new jobs to help cope with the plant's increasing workload PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN OST

Weekend sting at Peugeot

Nicholas Bannister on a first for the motor industry and a boost for the Midlands

PEUGEOT'S 900 new jobs at its Ryton plant near Coventry come with a sting in the tail — the workers will have to work every weekend.

The French-owned car firm confirmed yesterday that it was adding a third shift at Ryton to cope with booming demand for its newly-launched 206 model.

But it revealed that workers on the new shift, due to start in May, would work every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The plant is at present working two shifts a day, Monday to Thursday.

Workers on the new shift will work 439 fewer hours a year than their Monday-to-Thursday counterparts but get the same pay.

Income Data Services said Peugeot's weekend-only shift was a motor industry first in this country, although Friday-to-Sunday shifts had been used by Amec Process and Engineering, and by Motorola.

A Peugeot spokesman said there had been a shift in lifestyles. "We have had more than 200 telephone applications for jobs since we announced the news this morning," he said.

Richard Parham, Peugeot's UK managing director, said he expected the third shift to create up to 3,000 jobs in the Midlands when extra work for component suppliers was taken into account.

Ryton's success in winning the work, a few months after Nissan's Sunderland car plant was listed as the most efficient in Europe, challenges some of the Government's assumptions about poor productivity in the motor industry.

● Shop floor representatives of Rover Group's 39,000 employees yesterday approved overwhelmingly a deal designed to close the 30 per cent productivity gap between Rover workers and those of its German parent, BMW.

The deal, which involves the loss of at least 2,500 jobs and the introduction of flexible working practices, will be put to a ballot, with a result expected in about a week's time.

The BMW board was due to vote yesterday on whether to invest £1.7 billion to rebuild Rover's Longbridge plant, which is expected to build the new Mini and a replacement for the existing Rover 200 and

Manufacturing shrinks

Home services feel the pinch

Charlotte Denny

THE manufacturing sector is shrinking at its fastest rate since the end of the early 1990s recession while the previously buoyant consumer services sector is starting to feel the pinch as households cut optional spending, new figures revealed yesterday.

Evidence of the gathering economic gloom helped slice nearly two pfennigs off the value of sterling which closed last night in London at DM2.77.

Almost 40 per cent of firms surveyed by the Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply reported a fall in new orders while just 16 per cent reported an improvement. One in five firms said they were making workers redundant.

"This is yet more evidence of manufacturers struggling to survive in the current climate of both falling domestic and overseas demand," said Peter Thomson, the director of CIPS. "Worrying, declining activity levels are increasingly being translated into more widespread redundancies."

A Confederation of British Industry survey showed that the food and leisure industries are expecting lower turnover in the next three months.

Nearly 60 per cent of consumer services firms questioned reported that they were more pessimistic about their business situation now than three months ago. One in four respondents said they had laid off workers in the last quarter.

● House prices fell last month by their biggest margin for nearly two years, as the economic slowdown began to take its toll on the domestic property market, *writes Mark Atkinson.*

In the wake of recent Inland Revenue data showing the volume of housing transactions falling to a three-year low, the Halifax reported that average UK prices dropped by 0.6 per cent to £73,312 in November from £73,777 in October.

But in the City there's a silver lining for corporate financiers

Merger fees bonanza

Jill Treanor

CORPORATE finance experts were jumping with glee last night as they celebrated the prospect of healthy bonuses from the recent flurry of record-breaking mergers and takeovers.

In the past 10 days alone, deals and mergers worth at least £135 billion have been clinched, raking in bumper fees for investment bankers.

While stock markets stumbled and dealers and traders at firms such at Bankers Trust began the task of fighting for their jobs after the takeover by Deutsche Bank, corporate financiers were putting the finishing touches to some of the largest deals in history.

The burst of activity is a sharp contrast to the late summer and early autumn when the stock market rout and bond market turbulence sent many deal-makers running for cover.

The market for mergers and acquisitions all but shut up shop and, while the two-month gap in business will still take its toll on corporate financiers' bonuses, this recent spate of activity came just in time to count for this year's pay deals.

The calm that returned to the stock markets last month - perhaps only temporarily - provided the window for the mergers and acquisitions experts to pull off some deals that had been waiting in the pipeline.

"These large transactions have been very long in the making and long in the consideration," said Charles Alexander, managing director at Rothschilds investment bank.

Rolf Breuer, chief executive of Deutsche Bank, who entered the record books this week by buying Bankers Trust of the US for $10.1 billion, admitted he had first started talking to his opposite number at Bankers Trust in September.

Deutsche also gobbled up the Belgium operations of French bank Credit Lyonnais yesterday and has suggested that it has ambitions to buy other banks in Europe.

Corporate financiers in the UK are falling over themselves to find a partner for Barclays, which they see as vulnerable after the sudden departure of chief executive Martin Taylor.

The oil industry kept the financiers busy with yesterday's merger news.

Many of the deals have been international, but in the UK companies such as BTR and Siebe have tied the knot and smaller deals have also been finalised.

The enormous size of many of these transactions means corporate financiers will be taking large fees for sealing the deals. Some of them are paid retainers and then receive "success fees" for completing the transactions.

Even before the summer fall-out in the financial markets, many corporate financiers were excited by the size of the deals which were taking place. In the US, for instance, leading banks were merging by swapping their shares, which corporate financiers said could take place regardless of the level of the stock market, provided their shares fell in tandem.

Other deals may have been driven by chief executives seeing share price plummet and looking for ways to improve return to shareholders.

One corporate financier also pointed out yesterday that the markets were still far from normal and that marriages which required complex finance and bank loans were difficult to achieve.

However, other experts believe the prospects for more complex deals are improving.

"Ten weeks ago, a lot of deals were put on hold because the banking wasn't there," said Ian Jamieson, head of UK corporate finance at Deloitte & Touche. "There were signs in the last week or so that the banking markets were returning."

'These large transactions have been very long in the making'

Notebook

Symptoms add up to poor prognosis



Alex Brummer

THE rosy scenario that has propped up western financial markets since the turmoil sparked by the Russian devaluation and debt default is fading quickly. The falls seen on the European markets in yesterday's trading — a 4.8 per cent drop in the Dax in Germany and a 3.59 per cent drop in the FTSE — are substantial and reflect deep-seated concerns about global economic events. Why, then, is there a sudden return to gloom on the financial markets? It is the realisation that the global economy is slowing quite speedily. One of the symptoms of this slowdown is the sudden rash of mergers as some of the fatter multinationals shed costs and jobs.

The survey data is also less than encouraging. In the UK, while the Chancellor is away battling against tax harmonisation, the surveys have taken a nasty turn. It is the surveys these days that count — they are more forward-looking than official data and often more reliable. The UK Purchasing Managers Index has registered its lowest reading in its seven-year history, with orders still tumbling.

But it is not just manufacturing that is in the doldrums. The new, quarterly services sector survey, produced by the CBI and Deloittes, predicts falls in consumer, business and professional services as the cost pressures on the corporate sector start to bite. What was really scaring the markets in late trading was the US National Association of Purchasing Managers report, which came in sharply lower, sending the Dow down and bonds up, in expectation of interest rate cuts to come. Similarly, the German purchasing managers index was gloomy: so much for European Union, which was to keep global recession at bay. The latest equity market falls are almost certainly the start of a second, more permanent, correction.

Merger urges

LANGUISHING oil prices are behind the fashion for blockbuster oil mergers. But the oil price fluctuates on the basis of supply, demand and sentiment.

The price of Brent crude, the standard measure, reached $41.10 at the time of the build-up to the Gulf War in 1990 and is now a quarter of that. When the price was higher there were few suggestions that the oil companies should be broken up because of what turned out to be an upward blip in prices.

There is no reason to believe that the current low prices are anything but an aberration: they have been brought about by collapse of demand from emerging markets; the poor balance of payments situation in many oil producing countries that has led them to flood the market and new extraction technologies which have reduced costs.

None of these is a realistic reason for an agglomeration fever which, if allowed to continue unfettered, will do no more than recreate the trusts John D Rockerfeller built up at the start of the century.

The place to begin with intervention is the $86 billion takeover by Exxon of Mobil. Together, the companies believe they can make $2.8 billions a year in cost reductions. Yippee for them. But it cannot be in the public interest for any one company to have 22 per cent of the US energy market.

In the reshaping of the seven sisters which is taking place, the combination of France's Total and Belgium's PetroFina, to create a European champion that will rank sixth in the world might seem like a natural response to those that have already taken place — notably BP-Amoco.

All of this may be wonderful for shareholders but is appalling for consumers. The choice among oil providers is narrow enough without giving their avaricious managements — some of the best paid in the world — the chance to double their salaries and options at the expense of staff cuts.

Sure, efficiency dictates that the oil majors shrink in size. But it should not be at the expense of the consumer. The US Justice Department under Joel Klein has shown admirable diligence in opposing dominance in the telecommunications and new media markets. Similarly, in Europe the competition commissioner, Karel Van Miert, has demonstrated that he is no pushover, as British Airways and American Airlines have learnt. It is time for them to refocus on the oil industry and put brakes on the juggernaut before it runs away.

Boxing clever

CARLTON'S strategy for digital television has been absolutely right. The public doesn't want the 200 channels that its rival, Sky, is promoting but a narrower, cost-effective package providing the movies and sport which are the great hook. Unfortunately for Carlton, Rupert Murdoch was first out of the starting box and is using financial muscle in an effort to dominate the market and keep ONdigital, the Carlton/Granada rival on the defensive.

Despite the £27.9 million hit to pre-tax profits for Carlton — which dropped to £312.1 millions from £316 millions last time — investors should not be too gloomy.

Three depart at bio-tech firm facing inquiry

Jill Treanor and Julia Finch

BRITAIN'S bio-tech industry faced the prospect of a full-scale parliamentary investigation last night after a leading pharmaceutical research firm revealed it had misled investors about the prospects of two of its leading drugs and three of its senior executives left the company suddenly.

In an episode which recalled the furore surrounding British Biotech earlier this year, the new management of Cortecs warned that the development of its drugs for bronchitis and osteoporosis were "not as advanced as has previously been indicated".

Cortecs' acting chief executive, Dr Michael Flynn, who was appointed in June after the controversial departure of its founder, Glen Travers, will leave immediately, as will the two other executives, Dr Martin Preuveneers and Dr Geoff Hill.

The company's share price crashed to an all-time low of 9.5p, down nearly 65 per cent on the day.

The shares have traded as high as £4 — in 1996, when fund managers and investors expected the researchers to discover important drugs that would sell in vast amounts.

City sources said they expected the Stock Exchange to launch an inquiry into the company while Reuters news agency quoted a leading member of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee raising the prospect of a parliamentary probe.

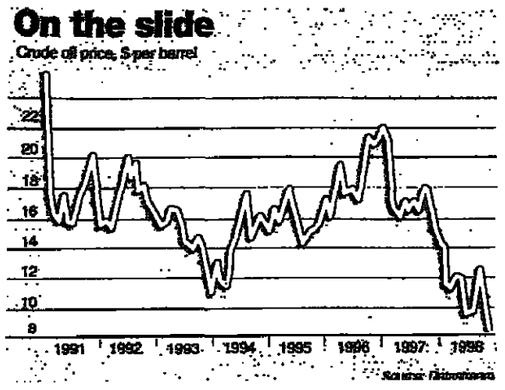
The select committee is due to publish further details tomorrow of its summer inquiry into the British Biotech scandal which was prompted by a former employee, who questioned the viability of British Biotech's leading drugs in development.

Dr Ian Gibson, MP, said he would raise the issue of Cortecs with the committee. "No doubt this will make people think [British Biotech] is not just a one-off — this is more widespread than we had thought," he said.

Cortecs was facing controversy before yesterday's revelations because of legal action brought by Mr Travers. He is suing the company he founded for £1.5 million, for wrongful dismissal.

Cortecs is chaired by the former education secretary Lord Patten.

Majors wrestle with crisis



Mergers cause double blow to North Sea jobs

US and European alliances are seen as answer to price plunge

Terry Macalister and Mark Tran in New York

THOUSANDS of oil industry jobs in Europe and the US are to go as a result of a new wave of mergers in the sector yesterday.

As many as 9,000 jobs, mostly in refining operations, could be lost with the $77.2 billion (£46.8 billion) alliance confirmed by Exxon and Mobil, creating the world's largest industrial company. The two groups aim to save $2.8 billion from their combined operating costs of $34 billion. Exxon employs 80,000 people while Mobil has 42,700 workers.

In Europe, the surprise £8 billion takeover of Belgium's PetroFina by Total of France is expected to cost many North Sea exploration jobs.

Total said the merger would allow substantial cost savings in exploration and production a well as refining and marketing. The all-share deal, which would give the combined group pro-forma 1997 sales of $52.98 billion (£32 billion) and a net income of $1.92billion, is subject to approval from shareholders, and European and US regulators.

Shares in Total fell nearly 10 per cent, while PetroFina stock rose 20 per cent as traders took advantage of the 37 per cent premium over Friday's closing price Total agreed to pay for the Belgian group.

The new US group, Exxon Mobil, will overtake Royal Dutch Shell as the world's biggest energy group. Exxon Mobil will also surpass General Motors, as America's largest company, with $203 billion in combined revenue last year.

In Europe, Exxon trades as Esso and its North Sea exploration and production is done in partnership with Shell. A question mark hangs over jobs in that area.

The mergers come at a time when oil companies face a double bind - the lowest oil prices in more than 10 years and rising exploration costs.

"The move is part of a global change. Oil prices have practically been cut in half over the past year. All companies are seeking to survive in this new situation," said Total chairman Thierry Desmarest, who takes the same post in the combined group. "The business environment will be tougher than in past years."

Some analysts queried the wisdom of the deal.One said: "Total is paying a 37 per cent premium, that's 22 per cent higher than PetroFina's all-time high, in a market where oil prices are at all-time lows."

British Petroleum and Amoco started the oil merger trend when they announced a $48.2 billion merger in August. BP believes that after merging with Amoco savings will amount to $2 billion annually by 2000. Half of those savings will result from reducing the workforce by some 6,000. The BP-Amoco deal is being scrutinised by the Federal Trade Commission, which will also have the task of examining Exxon's acquisition of Mobil.

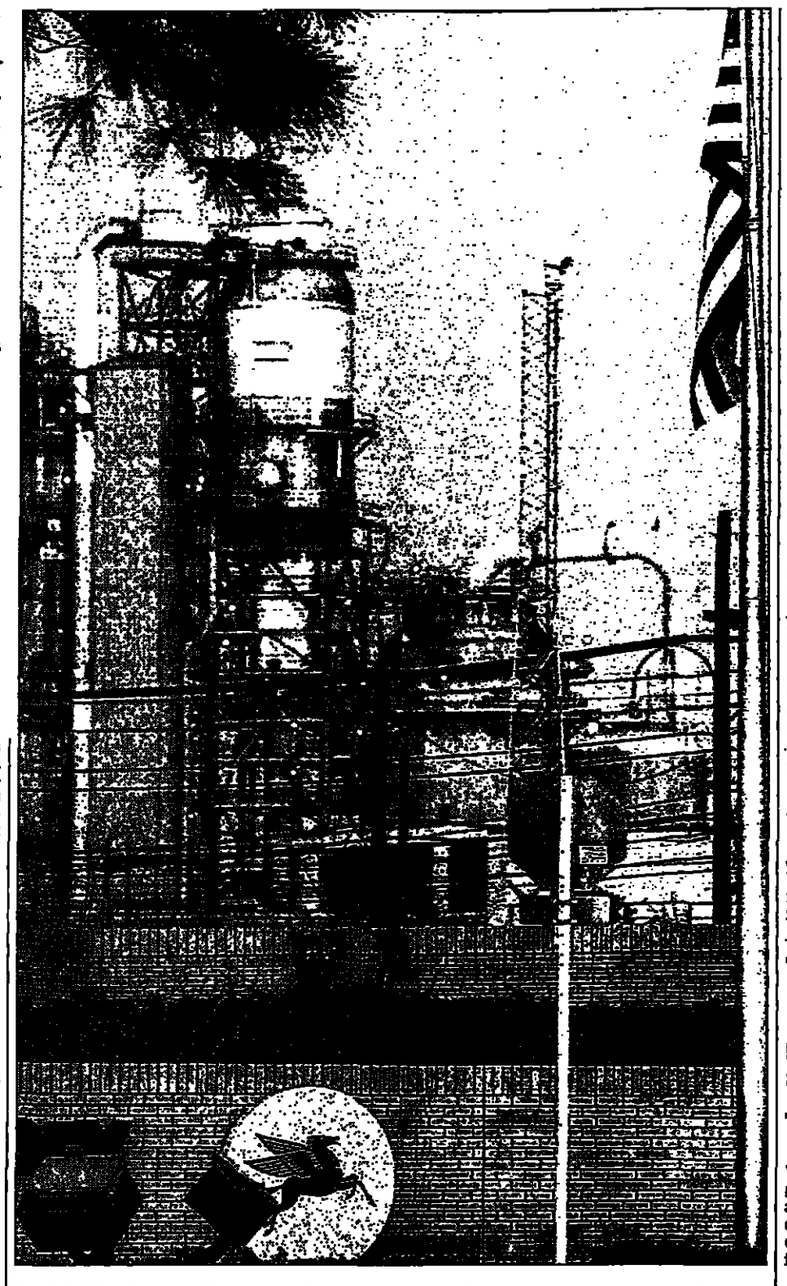
The Exxon-Mobil merger will reassemble the two biggest chunks of John D Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust, broken up in 1911 by the Supreme Court in America's most famous anti-trust case. Mobil is the former Standard Oil of New York, while Exxon was once Standard Oil of New Jersey.

Anti-trust regulators are almost certain to demand divestitures of refineries and petrol stations. The companies' total share of US petrol sales came to about 20 per cent last year.

The group probably will have to sell some petrol stations in Europe, where Mobil is already involved in a joint venture with BP.

But regulators are expected to give the green light to the merger because of the intense pressure to cut costs. Some smaller companies have begun to default on debt. With the Opec oil cartel unable to muster the necessacut back production, the trend is for lower oil prices over the next few years.

"The ultimate beneficiary of all this will be the consumer," said Daniel Yergin, the chairman of Cambridge Energy Research Associates.



The Mobil refinery in Beaumont, Texas, seems set to become part of the world's largest industrial company under the merger announced yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: PAT SULLIVAN

Shell ditches asset sell-off

Terry Macalister

ANGLO-DUTCH oil company Shell has been forced to cancel ground-breaking plans to sell millions of pounds-worth of assets as the price of oil plummets worldwide.

Failure to find buyers for the assets in the North Sea and Thailand is embarrassing for Shell because industry experts had hailed the disposal programme as an important sign that company management was at last ushering in a new era of cost-consciousness.

The news comes just 24 hours after Shell was forced to call off a proposed European joint venture with Texaco of the US, although this has fuelled speculation that the two companies might be limbering up for a full-blown merger in reaction to the other corporate tie-ups that have swept the industry in recent weeks.

Shell wanted to sell its interests in the North Sea Kingfisher field — which daily produce 30,000 barrels of oil and 138 million cubic feet of gas — as well as its entire exploration and production operation in Thailand. Shell has been criticised in the past for not disposing of badly performing assets.

Yesterday a Shell UK spokesman said the company was disappointed that it had not got the kind of offers that fully reflected the value of the interests.

"It is perhaps not surprising given the state of the oil markets. But Kingfisher is still a valuable asset for us and we will continue to operate it alongside our partner Esso," he said.

Shell International also put a positive gloss on the collapse of talks with buyers in Thailand. "We withdrew the assets because we did not get the offer we wanted," a spokeswoman said. "But this is a promising business because there has been a 50 per cent increase in proven oil reserves in our key S1 concession."

The failure is not just a setback for Shell. It also means that other oil companies might be forced to re-rate asset values to reflect that crude prices are at their lowest in real terms for 25 years.

This means that other companies, such as Premier Oil, which are trying to sell off North Sea assets to raise much-needed funds could also find themselves disappointed.

Shell traditionally has favoured joint ventures and alliances rather than corporate mergers. But the end of the talks with Texaco has triggered talk of a wider tie-up. The Shell spokeswoman said merger talks would be "news to me" while Texaco said it would "consider all options to improve business and increase value for shareholders".

Fadel Gheit, analyst with Fahnestock & Co in New York, said: "They may not be just forming an alliance but merging where they won't have different mindsets but a single set of goals."

But Alan Marshall, analyst with Robert Fleming Securities in London, said: "Shell does not need any more assets: it just needs to manage better the ones it has already."

Shell, which reported a 58 per cent drop in third quarter net profits to £497million, has been desperately trying to change its culture under the new chairmanship of Mark Moody-Stuart. Among the more unorthodox measures was to call in a Tibetan Buddhist priest to a recent management summit.

In September, Shell announced plans to close down its four regional headquarters including its London Shell-Mex House. It revealed last month that 3,000 jobs would be cut from its European oil products division.

The price of feebleness

DAN ATKINSON finds fear stalking spot markets with oil cheaper than water



TWENTY years ago, striking tanker drivers — the shock troops of the Winter of Discontent — strangled Britain's petrol supplies and set the scene for the oil crisis that followed the Shah of Iran's hurried departure from Tehran in 1979.

Last night the oil price was sliding towards its lowest levels in real terms since the last Ford Anglia rolled off the production line in 1967. Panic-stricken oil groups have rushed to merge to hold off slumping oil prices as motorists — already enjoying prices one-sixth per litre of the cost of mineral water in a London pub — anticipate the fruits of cut-price competition at the petrol pump. Analysts agree, with the most pessimistic predicting a rapid dive into single figures for the price of the benchmark Brent North Sea crude from last night's $10.44 a barrel for January delivery. Only 24 hours earlier, they had suggested $10.64 as the technical support level below which the price would disintegrate.

Inventories are thought to be at an all-time high, and US supplies were yesterday reported by the American Petroleum Institute to be 8 per cent higher in the week to November 20 than during the same period of 1997.

Ironically, the cause of the price slump is no different from the cause of the vertiginous price rises of the 1970s — the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). But whereas once the oil cartel's summit meetings struck fear into the industrialised west, last week's OPEC meeting in Vienna was so feeble and indecisive that its conclusion triggered the latest price falls.

However, one analyst has suggested that "green taxes" loaded on fossil fuels may result in the West having a recession, with slumping oil prices but without the low-cost fuel that could launch a recovery.

£3 billion set aside for former coalfield areas

Martin Wainwright

TARGETED partnership funds of almost £3 billion are to be invested in England's wrecked former coalfield areas, the deputy prime minister, John Prescott, announced yesterday.

A long-term package of new and redirected funding, topped up with surpluses from the old British Coal pension fund, will be monitored to prevent "pouring money away" on palliative measures rather than regeneration.

The components of the package were criticised as being too modest by the Coalfields Communities Campaign, an all-party group that has lobbied hard for strategic funding since the last major pit closures in the late 1980s. Scotland and Wales were also upset at the almost exclusively English nature of the package, though Mr Prescott forecast that extra measures would come with devolution.

The programme will aim at practicalities, including the possible retraining of ex-miners to work on the railways.

Announcing the package at a coalfields conference in Peterlee, County Durham, the deputy prime minister said: "Our rail companies are short of about 1,000 drivers. Well, the men are there in the coalfield areas, so perhaps we can begin to get them from the coalfields to working and driving trains and getting a better performance."

The £3 billion will be invested over three years, with a further £350 million to set up a regeneration trust and an enterprise fund to tap existing skills in areas such as South Yorkshire and the North-east and prevent a talent drain to more prosperous areas.

One of the Government's models, following a report by the Coalfields Task Force last summer, is the new Barnsley Design Centre, whose director, Robert Fellows, welcomed the targeted approach.Mr Prescott said the package was recompense for the abrupt nature of the pit closures of the 1970s and 1980s, which had left the former coalfields reeling.

"We need a long-term, 10-year-plus, programme. Today is just one step along the road. Over the next three years we are investing £750 million on housing, £1.4 billion on employment and training and £900 million on regeneration in local authority coalfield areas," he said

Joan Dixon, of the Coalfields Communities Campaign, said the inclusion of existing funds in the package meant the total was less than it appeared. But, she said: "The most important thing is that the Government has pledged a long-term commitment. This is a ray of hope after years of decline."

The miners' pension surplus of £10 million will be divided equally between English, Scottish and Welsh former coalfields.But the use of the surplus brought criticism from mining unions. Bleddyn Hancock, general secretary of the pit supervisors' body Nacods said the move was "a disgrace".



Help at last . . . Easington Colliery in County Durham was closed by Michael Heseltine in 1992 PHOTOGRAPH: MARK PINDER

News in brief

Three Barings chiefs are banned for incompetence

THREE former directors of the crashed Barings banking group were declared "incompetent" yesterday by a High Court judge and face a ban from Britain's boardrooms lasting up to 15 years each, as a result of their failures to detect and prevent the acitivities of Singapore-based rogue trader Nick Leeson.

Former main board deputy chairman Andrew Tuckey, former main board director and head of financial products Ronald Baker and former Barings investment subsidiary director and head of settlements Anthony Gamby had displayed a degree of incompetence such as to justify keeping them away from management of any company, said Mr Justice Jonathan Parker.

The length of the banning orders — which could be up to 15 years per person — will be determined at a future hearing.

Barings, Britain's oldest merchant bank, collapsed into bankruptcy in February 1995 after Leeson's £800 million gambles came to light. The Department of Trade and Industry applied for banning orders against 10 former Barings officers, seven of whom did not contest the orders and received prohibitions of up to three years.— *Dan Atkinson*

Pension clawback attacked

UNION leaders yesterday threatened to name and shame the blue-chip companies which seize millions of pounds every year from the pensions of their retired employees.

More than 2.5 million pensioners are affected by the practice, known as "clawback", whereby employers deduct the equivalent of the basic state pension or up to one-and-a-half times the lower earnings limit from the sum used to calculate pensions. This corporate raiding takes around £1,700 from the average person's pension every year and, because it is not scaled according to earnings, the lowest paid are the hardest hit.

Around 45 per cent of private-sector and 6 per cent of public-sector schemes claw back pensions. Some of the worst offenders are the blue-chip companies with large surpluses including J Sainsbury, Anglian Water, BOC Group, Courage, Ford and NatWest, although some companies have already abolished clawback — Glaxo Holdings, Jacobs Bakeries and Pearl Assurance now allocate the full pension to retired employees.— *Liz Stuart*

Buzz goes on to infinity

BUZZ Lightyear is indeed set for "infinity and beyond", the catchphrase of the toy spaceman in the film Toy Story. Despite the film being two years old — an infinity in the world of children's entertainment — Buzz is once again soaring in the Christmas sales, according to the Character Group, which owns rights to Buzz, his sidekick Woody and other stars such as Spice Girl dolls and the Teletubbies.

Character's chairman, Richard King, said sales of Buzz were higher this year than two years ago when the film was released. He believes the spaceman will stay in the charts for years, boosted by Toy Story II, which is due out in 2000.

He was speaking after reporting a rise in profits of more than 50 per cent to £7.3 million. Sales for the year to the end of August rose from £41 million to £69 million.

The company escaped the worst of the Christmas sales slump because of early ordering of seasonal merchandise. But Mr King said the business had felt the impact of the slowdown in consumer spending. – *Roger Cowe*

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Cyprus 0.796	Ireland 1.092	Norway 12.06	Switzerland 2.231
Denmark 10.34	Israel 6.91	Portugal 274.26	Turkey 476,265
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Racing

Hennessy fourth ready for quick reappearance. **Graham Rock** reports

Doyle set to take on Doran's Pride



Flat out ... Salty Behaviour (right) gets the better of Most Respectful on the sand at Southwell yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE SHELTON

BOSS DOYLE, who finished a respectable fourth to Teeton Mill in the Hennessy Gold Cup on Saturday, might make a surprisingly quick reappearance against Doran's Pride and Imperial Call in the John Durkan Chase at Punchestown on Sunday.

Mouse Morris was pleased with the way his horse had recovered from a hard race in testing ground. "He's come out of it well, and the Punchestown race is a possibility, but I won't make a decision until later in the week," he said.

Doran's Pride, third in the last two Cheltenham Gold Cups, is unbeaten this autumn, while Imperial Call, who won the steeplechasing championship three seasons ago, has shown signs of returning to something approaching his best form in recent races.

The Irish-trained Hill Society was one of the best backed horses with Ladbrokes for the Mitsubishi Shogun Tingle Creek Chase at Sandown on Saturday, and was clipped from 9-2 to 4-1. "He worked well this morning," said Noel Meade. Direct Route (8-1 to 7-1) and Mandy's Mantino (16-1 to 10-1) also attracted support, while Edredon Bleu was eased from 2-1 to 9-4.

Venetia Williams's Teeton Mill landed a substantial touch for his owners, The Winning Line, in the Hennessy. Racketball, representing the same combination, was the subject of a gamble with William Hill for the handicap hurdle they sponsor on Saturday's Sandown card, and was cut from 10-1 to 9-2.

Hill's also reported good money for the ante-post favourite, Blowing Wind, who is now 3-1 from 9-2. Martin Pipe's horse is 12-1 joint second favourite for the Champion Hurdle, together with Saturday's Fighting Fifth Hurdle winner, Dato Star.

Noel Meade made three entries for the Hills' race, but he announced yesterday that neither Nomadic nor Aboriginal would make the journey from Ireland. The trainer is likely to be represented by his progressive four-year-old, Snow Dragon, an 8-1 chance with the sponsors. "I'll consult the owners, but he's 90 per cent certain to run," Meade added. Philip Hobbs will make a decision on the participation of Polar Prospect nearer the weekend.

The champion hurdler Istabraq was clipped from 7-4 to 6-4 by Ladbrokes to repeat his Cheltenham victory in March and yesterday his owner, J. P. McManus, strengthened his hand for the big races through the winter by purchasing Le Coudray, France's leading four-year-old hurdler. His new acquisition will be trained in Ireland, probably by Aidan O,Brien.

The winner of four of his last five races, Le Coudray "has lots of quality, can jump quickly, and has plenty of stamina," according to his present trainer, Marcel Rolland. "All I hope is that if Le Coudray does not adapt to their obstacles, then he will be sent back to me," he said.

Reveley, Niven have field day at Newcastle

Ken Oliver

MARY REVELEY and her jockey Peter Niven have long been a standing dish at Newcastle and yesterday racegoers there had their biggest-ever feast from the mighty duo.

The lady from Saltburn chalked up a massive 10,709-1 four-timer, while Niven weighed in with a 5,354-1 treble.

Niven's winners were Kingennie, Alpine Panther and Time of Flight — all trained by Reveley, who also scored with Lord Lamb, who was ridden by Alan Dempsey.

Alpine Panther, carrying the colours of Peter Savill, chairman of the British Horseracing Board, gave Reveley the third leg of the quartet with victory in the John Collier Handicap Hurdle.

The five-year-old, shouldering top-weight of 12st, jumped to the front two out and held off Palace Of Gold by two lengths, with Merry Masquerade, a stablemate of the winner, third.

Unsaddling the 13-2 winner, Reveley, who is still at a loss to explain the way Seven Towers and Marello ran so badly at Newbury on Saturday, said: "Everybody was saying that we must have the virus, but that is not so."

Kingennie's victory, at 33-1, in the European Breeders Fund Joe Wake Novice Hurdle, represented a notable feat for Joan Niven, who not only bred the mare, but also her jockey.

The bay, whose dam Loch Brandy gave Niven his first winner as an amateur rider, surprised her connections with her six-length hurdling debut victory over Ahraydoubleyou.

"I thought she would be a bit green today because everything we have asked her to do she has done very greenly," explained Reveley.

"I thought she would have a good look at everything, but they make fools of you."

Noshinannikin, squeezed to 8-11 favourite by several four-figure wagers, certainly made a fool of his supporters, returning 11th of the 12 to finish.

Lord Lamb, the even-money favourite, initiated the Reveley foursome with a comfortable victory in the opening Tommy O'Connor Novice Hurdle.

The grey's debut over timber had been postponed after fog caused the card at Wetherby a fortnight ago to be abandoned, but he made up for time lost with a two-length beating of Tessajoe.

In view of Reveley's three wins prior to the concluding Harry Dixon Standard Open National Hunt Flat Race, it was a surprise to see that Time of Flight and Supreme Fortune, her two runners, were allowed to start at 20-1.

They came back first and second, with the Niven-partnered Time of Flight getting the better of Dempsey and Supreme Fortune by half a length.

Only Dan De Man stood between Reveley and a five-timer as he defied the stable's Wynyard Lady in the Philip Cussins Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle, thereby confounding racecourse rumour that he would find the soft ground against him.

Plumpton

	GRAHAM ROCK	TOP FORM
12.40	Inclination	Multi Franchise
1.10	Native Charm	Head For Heaven
1.40	Cavalero	Cavalero
2.10	Polar Flight	Polar Flight
2.40	Cardinal Rule	Cootleen Hero
3.10	Bowles Patrol	Onetorwillie
3.40	Millmount	Millmount

Going: Good to soft, soft in places. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rating.
Seven-day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 12.40 Prix De Clermont; 3.10 Sir Galeforce, Ballyharry. Visored: None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

12.40 BRIGHTON NOVICE CLAIMING HURDLE 2m 1f £2,390 (11 declared)

1 -F5021 Multi Franchise (30) (CD) Mrs L Jewell 5-11-0 — T Peoples (7) ●90
2 0 Prix De Clermont (F12) G L Moore 4-11-0 — P Hide ★
3 441005 Treasure Dome (F41) (D) C Weedon 4-11-0 — Sophie Mitchell 88
4 100-4F Russian River (22) J Bridger 6-10-12 — L Cummins (3) 84
5 /243-0 Limit The Damage (18) J Whyte 6-10-10 — J Goldstein (5) —
6 0-3 Inclination (38) Mrs L Jewell 4-10-8 — D Leahy 86
7 304/ Slippery Fin (611) (BF) W G M Turner 6-10-9 — J Power (7) —
8 0/P-4 Orange Place (15) G Llewellyn 7-10-8 — B Powell 85
9 -02200 Ma Barnicle (14) P Eccles 5-10-7 — M A Fitzgerald ★ 88
10 45 Rowlandsons Charm (46) Miss B Sanders 5-10-7 — A Maguire 87
11 P Princess Eileen (18) D O'Brien 4-10-5 — W Greatrex (7) —

Betting: 11-4 Multi Franchise, 4-1 Inclination, 5-1 Rowlandsons Charm, 7-1 Treasure Dome, 8-1 Ma Barnicle, 10-1 Orange Place, 12-1 Prix De Clermont.

1.10 HENFIELD NOVICE CHASE 2m 2f £2,868 (4 declared)

1 3F-F25 Gorman (18) Miss H Knight 6-10-12 — J Culloty —
2 62202- Head For Heaven (249) (C) (D) R Head 8-10-12 — B Fenton ●90
3 30214- Normania (253) Miss S Edwards 6-10-12 — L Aspell —
4 4102-F Native Charm (18) (BF) C Morlock 6-10-7 — J A McCarthy —

Betting: 5-6 Head For Heaven, 5-2 Native Charm, 6-1 Gorman, 7-1 Normania.

1.40 GALLEANO CHALLENGE CUP AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP CHASE 3m 1f 110yds £2,705 (4 declared)

1 11-22F Cavalero (17) (D) H Manners 9-12-0 — Mr A Charles-Jones (7) ●90
2 11-3/1 Woodlands Beau (17) (D) R Alner 6-11-4 — Mr J D Moore (7) 87
3 22/R-U Whippers Delight (16) (C) G Charles-Jones 10-10-0 — Mr B Forristal (7) 89
4 00-4P5 Joker Jack (16) R Dean 13-10-0 — Mr N Fehily (7) —

Betting: 10-11 Cavalero, 6-4 Woodlands Beau, 6-1 Whippers Delight, 33-1 Joker Jack.

2.10 DITCHLING NOVICE HURDLE 2m 4f £2,548 (13 declared)

1 2-0212 Phar Less Hassle (23) (CD) T McGovern 6-11-6 — T J Murphy 89
2 02-1 Polar Flight (18) (CD) Miss V Williams 4-11-5 — N Williamson ●90
3 4/0-40 Colour Counsellor (6) Miss A M Newton-Smith 5-10-12 — B Fenton 83
4 625-UF Fox Ridge (14) Miss S Edwards 6-10-12 — L Aspell —
5 43030/ Jakes Justice (635) (BF) Mrs L Richards 7-10-12 — J A McCarthy —
6 Purple Mahe (F389) S Dow 4-10-12 — C Llewellyn —
7 0 Raging Gale (44) L Wells 6-10-12 — W Greatrex (7) —
8 43/PP- Sheepgore Warrior (314) S Mellor 6-10-12 — C Webb —
9 5 Sharpest (18) J S Moore 4-10-12 — J Magee 88
10 Struggling On P Bowen 7-10-12 — W Marston —
11 P31-0 Supreme Day (25) D Nicholson 6-10-12 — A Maguire —
12 P Mrs Mackirdy (44) L A Dace 6-10-7 — D Barrows (5) —
13 8 Tanshed (18) Miss E Lavelle 6-10-7 — B Fenton —

Betting: 6-4 Polar Flight, 9-2 Phar Less Hassle, 6-1 Supreme Day, 7-1 Sharpest, 10-1 Jakes Justice, 12-1 Struggling On, 16-1 Fox Ridge.

2.40 OWL HOLDINGS HANDICAP CHASE 2m 5f £5,446 (6 declared)

1 1405P- Royal Mountbrowne (341) (C) Miss M Rowland 10-12-0 — B Powell —
2 12U38F Time Won't Wait (32) R Phillips 9-11-8 — C Llewellyn 88
3 /30U-R Lightening Lad (22) J King 10-11-4 — M A Fitzgerald —
4 33-315 Cootleen Hero (21) (C) R Alner 8-10-3 — A Thornton ●90
5 21/3?- Cardinal Rule (424) (CD) Miss V Williams 9-10-1 — N Williamson 89
6 PP-PP1 Scavo (18) (CD) D O'Brien 7-10-0 — J Culloty 86

Betting: 5-2 Time Won't Wait, 3-1 Cootleen Hero, 4-1 Cardinal Rule, 5-1 Scavo, 7-1 Royal Mountbrowne, 8-1 Lightening Lad.

3.10 PETER PANNETT 70TH BIRTHDAY NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE 3m 110yds £2,775 (11 declared)

1 26-012 Young Thruster (17) (BF) N Twiston-Davies 5-12-0 — C Llewellyn 84
2 PP-31P Onetorwillie (71) (BF) P Bowen 5-11-4 — W Marston ●90
3 0235/0 Tremplin (12) N Hawke 7-10-13 — B Powell 86
4 252P0P Sir Galeforce (23) (D) R Curtis 8-10-4 — J Goldstein (5) ★ 84
5 350/ Kass Bid (808) Mrs L Richards 7-10-0 — J A McCarthy —
6 64000- Ele-Yie-Meu (P15) L A Dace 5-10-0 — D Barrows (5) 87
7 D/0501 Dancing Poser (12) G Balding 8-10-0 — C Feeley (7) ★ 86
8 3/UP12 Bowles Patrol (12) J Upson 6-10-0 — G Supple (3) 88
9 0-4PP6 The Bizzo (12) J Panvert 7-10-0 — D Creech (7) —
10 2803-P Ballyharry (36) P Winkworth 8-10-0 — Mr B Forristal (7) ★ 82
11 FPPF/ Loyal Gait (598) (D) A J Wilson 10-10-0 — B Greene —

Betting: 5-2 Young Thruster, 9-2 Onetorwillie, Bowles Patrol, 5-1 Dancing Poser, 8-1 Tremplin, 10-1 Ele-Yie-Meu, 14-1 Sir Galeforce.

3.40 H.B.L.B. EASTBOURNE HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 4f £2,373 (6 declared)

1 4444-4 Tickerty's Gift (18) (D) G L Moore 8-11-10 — G Bradley 86
2 -41331 Hal Hoo Yaroom (16) (CD) J Jenkins 5-11-6 — N Williamson 87
3 1F2F-6 Millmount (27) (CD) T McGovern 8-10-11 — M A Fitzgerald ★ ●90
4 -03642 Keep Me In Mind (23) (D) N Mitchell 9-10-10 — Sophie Mitchell 88
5 12303- Fountain Bid (190) R Dean 6-10-4 — J Goldstein (5) 88
6 555-04 Derisbay (16) (C) J Bridger 10-10-0 — L Cummins (3) ★ —

Betting: 7-4 Hal Hoo Yaroom, 7-2 Millmount, 4-1 Tickerty's Gift, 7-1 Fountain Bid, 8-1 Keep Me In Mind, Derisbay

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CATTERICK	141	151
PLUMPTON	142	152
WOLVERHAMPTON	143	153
ALL COURSES COMMENTARY	09064 700 140	
ALL COURSES RESULTS	09064 700 150	

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	GRAHAM ROCK	TOP FORM
1.00	Orange Imp	Jessica One
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2.00	Celtic Duke	Strong Hicks
2.30	Free	Free (nb)
3.00	Oscail An Doras (nb)	Last Try
3.30	Meldrum Park	Meldrum Park

Oval, left-handed track of just under 1¼m with 240yds run-in. Sharp turns make it unsuitable for the long-striding galloper.
Going: Good, good to firm in places. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rating.
Seven-day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 1.30 Harkness Warrior; 2.00 Kings Sermon; 3.00 Millennium Man. Visored: 1.00 Sleeting.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

1.00 RICHMONDSHIRE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 3f £2,458 (21 declared)

101 01-B22 Jessica One (34) (CD) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 7-12-0 — M H Naughton ●90
102 060F40 Keep Clear (77) C Grant 8-11-7 — C McCormack —
103 12334- Orange Imp (191) J FitzGerald 5-11-1 — J Tizzard 88
104 06-320 Andy's Lad (11) F Murphy 6-10-13 — I Jardine (3) 89
105 6412-0 Victor Laszlo (58) R Allan 6-10-12 — T Hogger (6) 86
106 052-65 Contrafire (26) A Williams 6-10-12 — Michael Brennan 87
107 55-0P0 Takethetalk (18) (D) J Curtis 6-10-11 — O McPhail —
108 33-2P8 Hoh Explorer (21) D Barker 4-10-11 — M Handley (3) 84
109 305-3P Scarrots (6) S Gollings 4-10-10 — S Durack ★ 83
110 2432-0 Fryup Satellite (11) (CD) Mrs J Brown — B Grattan —
111 501-30 Mutasarrif (17) J Dodds 5-10-10 — L Cooper (6) 86
112 02-F44 Sleeting (88) J Mackie 5-10-10 — E Husband ★ 88
113 100-03 Dayoutsowme (18) J Howard Johnson 5-10-10 — J P Spencer 87
114 4-0246 Norman Conquest (6) M Hammond 4-10-8 — M Horrocks 83
115 05-345 Golden Thunderbolt (11) H Alexander 5-10-5 — R McGrath 85
116 0360-6 Lumback Lady (11) B Mactaggart 8-10-1 — G Lee —
117 116300 Zingibar (20) (D) J Bradley 6-10-0 — M Griffiths ★ 86
118 154200 Bay Galaxy (18) (BF) M Bielby 5-10-0 — T Siddall 89
119 0815F0 Octavio Hill (18) (BF) J Bradley 5-10-0 — G Kelly 84
120 0/2404 Ten Past Six (6) M Wane 6-10-0 — B Wilkinson ★ 79
121 000-0 Porter Paddy (5) L Lungo 6-10-0 — W Dowling —

Betting: 5-1 Andy's Lad, 13-2 Jessica One, 10-1 Fryup Satellite, Dayoutsowme, Golden Thunderbolt, 12-1 Orange Imp, Contrafire, Hoh Explorer, Mutasarrif, Sleeting, Zingibar.

FORM GUIDE - Jessica One: Held up, good headway 4 out, disputed lead 2 out, headed last, kept on, 2nd of 12, nk behind Sharp Command at Sedgefield 2m5f hcap hdle, Gd-Sft. Orange Imp: Mistake 2nd, prominent until ridden and weakened after 3 out, 4th of 6, 13l behind Lansdowne at Wetherby 2m4f claim hdle, Gd-Fm. Contrafire: Always prominent, every chance 3 out, ridden next, one pace between last 2, 5th of 11, 15l behind Just Lizzie at Hexham 2m hcap hdle, Hvy. Fryup Satellite: Chased leaders until ridden and beaten 3 out, 8th of 13, 21l behind Mohaninra at Catterick 2m nov ch, Gd-Fm. Mutasarrif: Chased leaders, hit 3 out, soon beaten, 9th of 14, 30l behind Eastern Project at Ayr 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft. Dayoutsowme: Made most until headed after 2 out, soon outpaced, 3rd of 5, 4l behind Woodfield Gale at Newcastle 2m4f hcap hdle, Gd-Sft. Golden Thunderbolt: In touch, effort 3 out, one pace from next, 5th of 18, 8l behind Monis, with Andy's Lad (gave 3lb) 9th, btn 22l, at Catterick 2m nov hcap hdle, Gd-Fm.

1.30 SCORTON SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE 2m £1,614 (19 declared)

201 F-P060 Kathyanna (85) (D) B Ellison 6-12-0 — Mr K R O'Ryan (7) —
202 6040- Hibernate (264) J Howard Johnson 4-11-2 — D Parker 82
203 -25602 Harkness Warrior (13) B Rothwell 4-10-10 — A S Smith ★ 88
204 F0/P6- Dorans Way (207) G M Moore 7-10-8 — N Horrocks (7) 83
205 20-5P0 Panooras Lord (11) J Wainwright 4-10-6 — A Dobbin 85
206 P66P-0 One Stop (18) M Barnes 5-10-6 — S Taylor 84
207 00P30- Marcellus (218) J Howard Johnson 4-10-5 — C McCormack (6) 86
208 0533-2 Lay The Blame (F25) (BF) M Hammond 5-10-4 — B Harding 87
209 30-060 Eurotwist (13) (CD) S A Parker 9-10-4 — G Lee ★ 87
210 00-321 Lord Pat (13) Miss K Milligan 7-10-4 — F Leahy ●90
211 43-44P Flintlock (58) (D) H Alexander 8-10-0 — R McGrath 86
212 PP440- Milling Brook (274) J Bradley 6-10-0 — S Durack 86
213 5-R05P Brandgate Flyer (13) (D) D Lamb 4-10-0 — Mr J Crowley (7) 83
214 P60P00 Eurolink The Rebel (12) (D) S Clark 6-10-0 — Miss R Clark (6) 85
215 P23005 Squire's Occasion (48) (D) R Ford 5-10-0 — N Horrocks (5) ★ 84
216 0P05-0 Public Way (11) Mrs A Naughton 8-10-0 — J Supple 84
217 5045UP Royal Circus (P15) (D) P Hiatt 9-10-0 — E Husband 85
218 2524/P Wycliffe (13) R Mason 10-10-0 — K Johnson —
219 50-000 Members Welcome (8) (CD) W Tinning 5-10-0 — B Storey —

Betting: 7-2 Lay The Blame, 4-1 Lord Pat, 11-2 Harkness Warrior, 12-1 Squire's Occasion, 14-1 Hibernate, Dorans Way, 16-1 Panooras Lord, Marcellus, Eurolink The Rebel, Royal Circus.

FORM GUIDE - Hibernate: Headway 6th, chased leaders, ridden and weakened approaching 3 out, 7th of 14, 38l behind Alpine Hideaway at Newcastle 2m nov clm hdle, Gd-Fm. Dorans Way: Chased leaders until weakened approaching 2 out, 6th of 14, 38l behind Woodrising at Hexham 2m sell hdle, Gd. Panooras Lord: Prominent until gradually weakened from 3 out, 7th of 18, 15l behind Monis, with Public Way (rec 6lb) 8th, btn 19l, at Catterick 2m nov hcap hdle, Gd-Fm. Marcellus: Always rear division, 8th of 13, well behind Island Sanctuary at Wetherby 2m nov hdle, Gd. Lay The Blame: Tracked leaders, led 2 out, soon headed, no extra, 2nd of 8, 8l behind Eastern Project at Perth 2m nov hcap hdle, Gd-Fm. Lord Pat: Always prominent, led approaching 2 out, stayed on well, won by 32l from Harkness Warrior (gave 5lb), with Eurotwist (rec 2lb) 7th, btn 24l, Eurotwist (gave 9lb) 8th, btn 25l, Brandgate Flyer (gave 7lb) pulled up 3 out, at Sedgefield 2m1f sell hcap hdle, Gd-Sft. Squire's Occasion: Made most until 6th, soon weakened, 5th of 9, 27l behind Maradi at Fakenham 2m cond hcap hdle, Gd-Sft.

2.00 49'S HANDICAP CHASE (SHOWCASE RACE) 3m 1f 110yds £7,588 (22 declared)

301 11-PSR Jimmy O'Dea (11) (D) J Mackie 11-12-0 — E Husband ★ —
302 2P1-PF Strong Hicks (11) J Howard Johnson 10-11-11 — D Parker ★ ●90
303 0-P010 Sharp Command (13) P Eccles 5-11-8 — S Kelly (5) 85
304 10P2U- Dark Oak (215) (CD) (BF) J Curtis 12-11-4 — E Callaghan 86
305 234-13 Baelic Blue (18) (D) (BF) Mrs S Smith 8-11-4 — S Durack 88
306 2P3-54 Radical Choice (7) (CD) J Charlton 9-11-3 — B Storey 88
307 031-14 Supreme Soviet (18) A Williams 8-11-2 — A Dobbin 87
308 32-U24 Rustic Air (22) J FitzGerald 11-10-13 — B Gentry 86
309 2111-5 Stage Fright (18) F Murphy 7-10-13 — C O'Dwyer ★ 85
310 25-21? Hopeful Lord (6) (7lb ex) (D) J J O'Neill 6-10-11 — R McGrath 88
311 2P6-P0 Kings Sermon (26) (D) P Beaumont 9-10-10 — R Supple ★ 88
312 35P40- Pink Gin (282) (D) M Meagher 11-10-6 — C McCormack (5) ★ —
313 0114-5 Gale Force (22) P Beaumont 7-10-8 — B Grattan (5) 86
314 P544-4 Pebble Beach (74) (D) G M Moore 8-10-6 — J Callaghan 85
315 0U21F5 I'm The Man (13) (D) Mrs D Sayer 7-10-6 — M Gault (7) 86
316 263-13 Celtic Duke (13) M Hammond 6-10-5 — B Harding 87
317 1P42-0 Another Venture (13) (C) F Murphy 8-10-5 — Mr J P McNamara (5) 88
318 P163-2 Arctic Fox (70) (CD) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 6-10-4 — P Niven 86
319 535-3P Bales (13) Mrs M Reveley 7-10-4 — Mr A Dempsey (3) ★ 86
320 P-F344 D'Arblay Street (13) (D) W Kemp 9-10-1 — Mr J Crowley (7) ★ 86
321 /32-3U German Legend (13) D Lamb 8-10-1 — D Bentley 86
322 142-45 Karnesafine (18) (CD) (BF) Mrs S Smith 7-10-0 — R Wilkinson (5) 88

Best early-morning prices: 6-1 Hopeful Lord (H, T), 8-1 Celtic Duke (C), 10-1 Arctic Fox (C, H), Radical Choice (C), Supreme Soviet (H, T), 12-1 Gaelic Blue (H, T), 14-1 Strong Hicks (T), 16-1 Stage Fright (T), 20-1 Karnesafine (L), Gale Force (C, H, L), Rustic Air (H, L), Sharp Command (H, L, T), Another Venture (H, L), 25-1 Dark Oak (H, L, T), I'm The Man (H, L), Bales (L), Kings Sermon (C), 33-1 D'Arblay Street (L), Jimmy O'Dea (general), Pebble Beach (L), 40-1 German Legend (C, T), Pink Gin (C, L, T).
● C (Coral), H (Hills), L (Ladbrokes), T (Tote).

FORM GUIDE - Jimmy O'Dea: Dropped rear 12th, behind when refused at the 17th in race won by Sole Gent at Huntingdon 3m6f hcap ch, Gd. Strong Hicks: Held up, headway 6th, led 9th, clear when fell at the 13th in race won by Earth Summit at Aintree 3m3f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Gaelic Blue: Headway 11th, blundered and lost place 16th, no impression after, 3rd of 6, 11l behind Purevalue, with Stage Fright (rec 11lb) 5th, btn 35l, at Newcastle 3m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Radical Choice: In touch, blundered 4 out, headway 3 out, stayed on, never able challenge, 4th of 12, 13l behind Solsgirth at Hexham 2m4f hcap ch, Hvy. Supreme Soviet: In touch, outpaced from 13th, 3rd and beaten when blundered last, 4th of 6, 16l behind Calypso Out at Ayr 2m4f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Hopeful Lord: Held up, headway to lead 3 out, headed next, led last, cleverly, won by 2l from The Tick-Tack Man at M Rasen 3m1f hcap ch, Hvy. D'Arblay Street: Chased leaders from halfway, blundered 12th, no impression after, 4th of 13, 17l behind Zamkeeser, with I'm The Man (gave 3lb) 5th, btn 39l, Another Venture (gave 2lb) 7th, btn 48l, German Legend (rec 6lb) unseated rider at 7th, at Sedgefield 3m3f am hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Celtic Duke: Headway 5th, led 2 out, jumped slowly last, soon headed, one pace, 3rd of 7, 2l behind New Leaf at Ascot 3m nov hcap ch, Gd-Sft.

2.30 ELLERTON JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 2YO 2m £2,430 (12 declared)

401 2123 Free (18) (D) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 11-5 — P Niven ●90
402 P Asperilla (18) B Ellison 10-12 — Mr K R O'Ryan (7) —
403 Happy Days (F65) D Moffatt 10-12 — D J Moffatt —
404 Fm Ted (F69) T Easterby 10-12 — L Wyer —
405 U4 Jago (11) M W Easterby 10-12 — F Leahy 84
406 5 No Shoes No Blues (11) M A Buckley 10-12 — Mr A Dempsey (3) 87
407 Flashurp (F78) R Ford 10-12 — R McGrath —
408 Roverabbo (P165) Mrs M Reveley 10-12 — M H Naughton (5) —
409 0 Slip Venture (16) M Hammond 10-12 — B Harding 84
410 45 Wynbury Flyer (102) F Murphy 10-12 — C O'Dwyer 86
411 All Our Blessings (F42) Mrs A Swinbank 10-7 — J Supple —
412 34 Priolette (22) J FitzGerald 10-7 — C McCormack (5) 88

Betting: 6-4 Free, 11-2 Priolette, 7-1 Wynbury Flyer, 8-1 Slip Venture, 10-1 Happy Days, 12-1 I'm Ted, Roverabbo.

FORM GUIDE - Free: Chased leaders until well outpaced 4 out, kept on towards finish, 3rd of 8, 13l behind Hunt Hill at Newcastle 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft. Asperilla: Behind when blundered 3rd, tailed off when pulled up 2 out in race won by Premium Quest at M Rasen 2m1f nov hdle, Sft. Jago: Prominent, effort 3 out, one pace, 4th of 11, 24l behind Accystan at Catterick 2m nov claim hdle, Gd-Fm. No Shoes No Blues: Prominent, every chance 3 out, ridden and beaten next, 5th of 10, 14l behind Dangerous Precedent at Huntingdon 2m nov hdle, Gd. Slip Venture: Always behind, 9th of 10, 35l behind Paname House at Wetherby 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft. Wynbury Flyer: Held up, steady headway 3 out, never near to challenge, 5th of 13, 14l behind Fight For Freedom at Perth 2m nov hdle, Fm. Priolette: Headway approaching 4th, jumped right last, beaten when hung left flat, 4th of 12, 5l behind Another Beveled at Huntingdon 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft.

3.00 NORTH YORKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE 2m £2,861 (13 declared)

501 4-1252 Last Try (22) (CD) B Rothwell 7-11-13 — A S Smith ●90
502 F-3203 Tapatch (11) (CD) M W Easterby 10-11-12 — F Leahy ★ 88
503 42-455 Marble Man (13) (D) M Pell 8-11-11 — A Dobbin 85
504 13F3/5 Prince Skyburd (27) (D) Mrs P Aitson 7-11-10 — L Wyer —
505 625/30 Oscail An Doras (14) (D) F Murphy 9-11-8 — C O'Dwyer 87
506 52F0-3 La Riviera (18) (D) J Charlton 6-11-7 — B Storey 88
507 332-04 Overcraam (11) (D) J FitzGerald 5-11-5 — E Callaghan 88
508 344-62 Ham N'Eggs (11) (D) M Hammond 7-11-4 — B Harding 87
509 -12646 Dounes (11) (D) N Mason 8-11-0 — R Guest 85
510 /4FF-0 Clavering (13) J Howard Johnson 8-10-12 — D Parker —
511 3-0003 Buppies (8) (D) M Chapman 11-10-9 — W Worthington 83
512 8P0465 Italok (50) J L Harris 6-10-0 — L O'Hara 82
513 /P-0PP Millennium Man (11) F Murtagh 7-10-0 — C McCormack (5) ★ —

Betting: 7-2 Ham N'Eggs, 9-2 Last Try, 11-2 Tapatch, 6-1 La Riviera, 7-1 Oscail An Doras, 8-1 Overcraam, 10-1 Marble Man.

FORM GUIDE - Last Try: Chased leaders, 4l 2nd and beaten when blundered badly 2 out, 2nd of 8, 23l behind Xaipete at Sedgefield 2m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Marble Man: Led until 2nd, close up until weakened approaching last, 5th of 6, 21l behind Chummy's Saga at Sedgefield 2m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Prince Skyburd: In touch until ridden and weakened approaching 3 out, tailed off, 5th of 6, well behind The Ears at Haydock 2m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Oscail An Doras: Prominent, led 8th, edged right and headed 2 out, one pace, 3rd of 16, 38l behind Builder Boy at Hereford 2m3f amat hcap ch, Gd. La Riviera: Prominent, left 2nd 10th, one pace from 4 out, 3rd of 8, 5l behind Minster Glory at Newcastle 2m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Overcraam: Headway and prominent 5th, one pace from 3 out, 4th of 13, 8l behind Nistaanira, with Millennium Man (levels) pulled up 3 out, at Catterick 2m nov ch, Gd-Fm. Ham N'Eggs: Always chasing leaders, every chance and blundered last, kept on, 2nd of 8, 13l behind Adamatic, with Tapatch (gave 13lb) 3rd, btn 8l, at Catterick 2m3f hcap ch, Gd-Fm. Dounes: Always in rear, 6th of 10, behind Lanes 2m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Clavering: Led from 2nd until between last 2, eased when beaten last, last of 8, well behind Chummy's Saga at Sedgefield 2m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. Buppies: Always outpaced and behind, 3rd of 4, well behind Caesar Express at M Rasen 2m1f hcap ch, Hvy.

3.30 STREETLAM NOVICE HURDLE 2m 3f £2,640 (19 declared)

601 52041 Meldrum Park (11) (CD) F Murphy 5-10-12 — Mr J P McNamara (5) ●90
602 0PF5-P Boundsbonsoir (54) J Howard Johnson 6-10-10 — A S Smith —
603 000-0 Bravo Man (8) J Curtis 4-10-10 — E Callaghan —
604 00-F Cap In Hand (18) Mrs S Smith 6-10-10 — D J Moffatt —
605 00P Castlemill (18) O Brennan 6-10-10 — S Melrose (7) —
606 P35-0P Dont Say That (17) J Dodds 6-10-10 — P Niven —
607 UFP-P Elliott The Butler (14) Mrs S Smith 6-10-10 — R Wilkinson (5) —
608 FP08-2 Global Legend (69) I Emmerson 8-10-10 — J Supple 88
609 2-61 Grismold Lad (69) M Hammond 4-10-10 — B Harding —
610 6/ Jimmy Sprite (765) R Barr 7-10-10 — N Smith —
611 141-54 John Bush (26) P Eccles 4-10-10 — D Byrne 85
612 650-0 Lord Of The Land (17) Mrs D Sayer 5-10-10 — B Storey —
613 30000- Persuasive Talent (336) D Lamb 7-10-10 — J Burke 82
614 20-P23 Rochebury (28) F Murtagh 5-10-10 — A Dobbin 89
615 Caledonian Kate B Mactaggart 6-10-5 — G Lee —
616 000-0 Lauranuba (23) B Bousfield 6-10-5 — S Taylor —
617 0242-P Memasbib Oleskeen (16) S Gollings 7-10-5 — S Durack 89
618 006-F The Big Rockette (22) M Meagher 5-10-5 — C McCormack (5) —
619 01-3 Twenty Winks (22) J J Quinn 5-10-5 — L Wyer 86

Betting: 7-2 Meldrum Park, 4-1 Memasbib Oleskeen, 5-1 Global Legend, 6-1 Rochebury, 7-1 Twenty Winks, 8-1 Grismold Lad, 10-1 John Bush.

FORM GUIDE - Meldrum Park: Went prominent 5th, led after 3 out, kept on well under pressure, won by 2l from Lieas-G at Catterick 2m3f mdn hdle, Gd-Fm. Global Legend: Held up, headway halfway, challenged between last 2, ridden and no extra flat, 2nd of 8, 2l behind Thornpson House at Perth 2m4f mdn hdle, Gd. Grismold Lad: Held up, headway halfway, disputed lead 4 out, kept on well final furlong, won by 3l from New Dawn at Perth 2m NH Flat, Gd. John Bush: Held up, headway 6th, weakened approaching 2 out, 4th of 10, 22l behind The Wiltar at Taunton 3m nov hdle, Gd. Rochebury: Held up, ridden and outpaced approaching 3 out, stayed on from next, 3rd of 9, 7l behind Mazilleo at Ludlow 2m nov hdle, Gd. Memasbib Oleskeen: Prominent until weakened 7th, tailed off when pulled up 3 out in race won by Dutch Dyane at Leicester 2m4f hcap hdle, Sft. Twenty Winks: Ran on, 3rd of 11, 11l behind Tessajoe at Sedgefield 2m1f nov hdle, Gd-Sft.

Wolverhampton (A.W.) programme

	GRAHAM ROCK	TOP FORM
1.20	Royal Cascade	Big Ben
1.50	Munasib	Flame Tower
2.20	Royal Roulette	Tayseer
2.50	Sea Ya Maite	Opera Buff
3.20	Landrian	Italian Symphony
3.50	Dom Shadeed	Royal German
4.20	Sharp Hint (nap)	Soaked

All-weather, left-handed, of just under 1m with run-in of 380yds. Sharp bends.
Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rating.
Drawn: No advantage.
Seven-day winners: 2.50 Italian Symphony; 4.20 Soaked.
Blinkered first time: 1.50 Rolling Thunder; 3.20 Catfoot Lane; 4.20 Balleslifa. Visored: 2.20 Crow's Nest.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J, Jumps.

12.50 CLAIMING STAKES (Div 1) 6f £2,285 (13 declared)

1 (10) 002000 Acid Test (17) (D) M A Buckley 3-9-11 — S Copp (5) 87
2 (5) 200301 Big Ben (18) R Hannon 4-9-7 — Dane O'Neill ●90
3 (11) 0300-0 Bob The Broker (74) (D) K Burke 4-9-3 — D Sweeney 82
4 (6) -21110 Krystal Max (12) (D) (BF) T Barron 5-9-3 — Kimberley Hart (5) 88
5 (7) 025002 Royal Cascade (18) (CD) B McMahon 4-9-1 — V Halliday ★ 88
6 (4) 004040 Mike's Double (8) (CD) Mrs N Macauley 4-8-13 — R Price ★ 83
7 (3) 5440-3 Ring The Chief (334) M Usher 6-8-13 — W Hutchinson (7) 86
8 (1) 000805 Ajig Dancer (8) M Channon 3-8-8 — Candy Morris 88
9 (8) 610060 Mike Dader (76) (D) J Balding 4-8-7 — J Edmunds 82
10 (2) 204000 La Petite Fusee (58) (C) (D) Miss S Wilton 7-8-6 — S Whitworth 81
11 (3) 064000 Baffy (19) (C) (D) B Baugh 5-8-5 — P M Quinn (7) 79
12 (12) 000000 Panther (97) (CD) P Evans 8-8-3 — C Cogan (7) ★ 77
13 (13) 34003 Love Opera (20) J Berry 3-8-2 — P Bradley (7) 83

Betting: 9-4 Krystal Max, 3-1 Big Ben, 7-2 Ajig Dancer, 12-1 Acid Test, Bob The Broker, Royal Cascade, Mike's Double, Ring The Chief, Love Opera.

1.20 HUNDRED YEARS MAIDEN STAKES (Div I) 1m 100yds £2,749 (10 declared)

1 (8) 0 Its Jack (8) T Donnelly 5-9-1 — C Rutter 83
2 (6) 3-300 Battle Glen (41) A Bailey 3-9-0 — A Mackay 84
3 (1) 340544 Flame Tower (15) R Hannon 3-9-0 — P Dobbs (7) ●90
4 (3) 000000 House On Fire (12) G Woodward 3-9-0 — J Fanning 82
5 (3) -03006 Munasib (57) S Kettlewell 3-9-0 — A McGlone 87
6 (5) 022600 New Yorker (9) Mrs A Sidell 3-9-0 — C Lowther ★ 88
7 (7) 00 Mary Hannah (20) A Senior 5-8-10 — R Lappin 84
8 (10) -05005 Blue Dawn (12) B Johnson 3-8-9 — A Clark 86
9 (4) 0 Marina's Song (12) S Bowring 3-8-9 — G Strange 84
10 (2) 06-03 Shade D'amethyste (J11) M Pipe 3-8-9 — Dane O'Neill 85

Betting: 7-2 Munasib, 9-2 Flame Tower, Blue Dawn, 11-2 Battle Glen, 13-2 Shade D'amethyste, 8-1 New Yorker, 12-1 Marina's Song.

1.50 M.E.B. CONTRACTING CLAIMING STAKES (Div 2) 6f £2,285 (13 declared)

1 (3) 4-5010 Tayseer (11) (D) W Muir 4-9-11 — T Sprake ●90
2 (11) 04000 Mac's Dream (12) A Carroll 3-9-3 — M Tebbutt 83
3 (12) Rolling Thunder R McGhin 6-8-13 — A McGlone ★ —
4 (5) 650030 Sarrmer (35) (D) Mrs N Macauley 6-8-13 — Dane O'Neill 84
5 (6) 300005 Malifa (18) (CD) (BF) T Barron 5-8-9 — O Pears ★ 88
6 (8) 030404 Phoenix Princess (27) (D) Miss G Kelleway 4-8-8 — S Whitworth ★ 87
7 (7) 60-000 Tempus Fugit (49) B Millman 3-8-6 — Dean McKeown 82
8 (9) 600000 Ok John (135) J Akehurst 3-8-5 — A Clark 79
9 (13) 000660 Kolby (16) A Bailey 3-8-3 — J Bosley (7) 86
10 (3) 664605 Little Burr (12) (CD) P Evans 7-8-3 — G Carter 87
11 (4) 060501 Mary Jane (18) (C) (D) J Berry 3-8-2 — P Fessey 88
12 (10) 000-00 Surpressa Cara (776) B Johnson 3-8-2 — P Doe (5) 81
13 (1) 600505 Sing For Me (9) (C) R Hollinshead 3-7-12 — P M Quinn (7) 84

Betting: 5-1 Tayseer, Mary Jane, 13-2 Rolling Thunder, Malifa, Phoenix Princess, 8-1 Sarrmer, 10-1 Mac's Dream, Kolby, Little Burr, Surpressa Cara, Sing For Me.

2.20 BRITISH GAS HANDICAP 2m 46yds £3,404 (8 declared)

1 (1) 526683 Opera Buff (30) (C) Miss G Kelleway 7-9-10 — P Fredericks (7) ●90
2 (3) 363-31 Dancing Cavalier (16) (C) R Hollinshead 5-8-5 — P M Quinn (7) 88
3 (2) 122200 Operatic (1) (C) (D) P Evans 3-8-1 — C Cogan (7) ★ 89
4 (6) 020441 Paradise Navy (8) (6lb ex) (D) C Egerton 9-8-0 — B Warton (3) ★ 87
5 (8) 04-605 Royal Roulette (15) Miss B Sanders 4-7-10 — G Bardwell 88
6 (4) 500640 Calaridge (18) (D) J Sheehan 10-7-10 — P Doe (5) ★ 83
7 (7) 00600 Crow's Nest (16) Lord Huntingdon 3-7-10 — P Fessey ★ 82
8 (5) 646 What The Devil (180) J Smith 5-7-10 — N Carlisle 80

Betting: 5-2 Paradise Navy, 3-1 Opera Buff, 7-2 Dancing Cavalier, 6-1 Operatic, 8-1 Crow's Nest, 10-1 Royal Roulette, 16-1 Calaridge, 50-1 What The Devil.

2.50 THORPE VERNON HANDICAP 1m 100yds £3,583 (13 declared)

1 (7) 123331 Italian Symphony (7) (6lb ex) (C) P Evans 4-10-6 — C Cogan (7) ★ ●90
2 (2) 502610 Westmoor's Weigh (25) (C) R Hollinshead 5-9-11 — W Ryan 85
3 (4) 542154 Be Warned (18) (C) (D) (BF) J Pearce 7-9-9 — G Bardwell ★ 86
4 (13) 250308 Hostwood (36) R Hannon 3-9-9 — Dane O'Neill 84
5 (9) 334450 Antonias Melody (44) S Bowring 5-9-7 — G Strange 82
6 (10) 643120 Jay-Owe-Two (46) (D) R Whitaker 4-9-5 — Dean McKeown 85
7 (11) 000004 Godmersham Park (68) (CD) P Felgate 6-9-1 — G Carter 79
8 (12) 330004 Sea Ya Maite (44) (CD) S Bowring 4-8-12 — C Teague (3) 88
9 (3) 200064 Hegemony (8) (D) G Bravery 6-8-11 — N Day 83
10 (5) 226112 Yeoman Oliver (25) (CD) B McMahon 5-8-5 — S Whitworth ★ 89
11 (6) 652613 Kingdom Ruby (118) Miss J A Camacho 3-8-4 — T Sprake 88
12 (8) 124050 Tifosi (18) J J Quinn 3-7-12 — P Fessey 84
13 (1) 003202 Sand Hawk (8) D Shaw 3-7-10 — P Doe (5) 86

Betting: 9-2 Yeoman Oliver, 6-1 Be Warned, 7-1 Kingdom Ruby, 8-1 Italian Symphony, Jay-Owe-Two, Hegemony, 10-1 Westmoor's Weigh, Sand Hawk.

3.20 COD SELLING STAKES 1m 100yds £1,945 (13 declared)

1 (10) 063000 Acoozym (18) (CD) C Allen 6-9-3 — O Pears ★ 83
2 (7) 000000 Beroting (348) N Littmoden 6-9-3 — T G McLaughlin 82
3 (3) 560102 Roffey Spinney (18) J Cullinan 4-9-3 — B Smith (7) ●90
4 (8) 014021 Salty Behaviour (1) (D) P Evans 4-9-3 — Dane O'Neill 88
5 (9) 505106 Star Manager (115) (D) R Spicer 8-9-3 — C Rutter 86
6 (12) 342026 Rapsford (7) (CD) M Wane 4-8-12 — R Price 87
7 (6) 004130 My Legal Eagle (50) J Hills 4-8-12 — A Clark 85
8 (2) 000043 Arbenig (18) (C) B Palling 3-8-11 — B Faulkner (3) 84
9 (1) 100000 Catfoot Lane (5) (D) W G M Turner 3-8-11 — M Tebbutt ★ 79
10 (4) 020000 Jato Dancer (6) (D) J Arnold 3-8-11 — C Lowther ★ 78
11 (13) 050006 Landrian (46) (CD) H Collingridge 3-8-11 — Dean McKeown 83
12 (11) 400000 Hil Rhapsody (7) B Palling 4-8-7 — T Sprake 80
13 (5) 0000-0 Mercury Falling (16) D Arbuthnot 3-8-6 — P Doe (5) 79

Betting: 11-4 Rapsford, 7-2 Salty Behaviour, 4-1 Roffey Spinney, 10-1 Burning, Star Manager, My Legal Eagle, Arbenig.

3.50 HUNDRED YEARS MAIDEN STAKES (Div 2) 1m 100yds £2,736 (9 declared)

1 (4) 4 Nip In Sharp (57) J Eyre 5-9-1 — C Lowther 87
2 (7) 065 Dom Shadeed (131) Lord Huntingdon 3-9-0 — W Ryan 89
3 (5) -32430 Naked Oat (236) B Smart 3-9-0 — R Perham 88
4 (6) 544403 Parting Echo (46) J Toller 3-9-0 — S Whitworth 88
5 (3) 4 Royal German (12) E Dunlop 3-9-0 — G Carter ●90
6 (1) Order In Court A Bailey 4-8-10 — A Mackay —
7 (8) 0 Princesse Zaida (102) Miss L Siddall 4-8-10 — Dean McKeown 82
8 (2) 4503 Daphne's Doll (41) Miss G Kelleway 3-8-9 — T Sprake 86
9 (9) U0 Miss Lacroix (J88) R Hollinshead 3-8-9 — A Culhane 83

Betting: 15-8 Royal German, 7-2 Dom Shadeed, 9-2 Naked Oat, Daphne's Doll, 7-1 Parting Echo, 14-1 Nip In Sharp, Order In Court.

4.20 BOWMER AND KIRKLAND (DESIGN AND BUILD) HANDICAP 5f £2,871 (13 declared)

1 (8) 400211 Soaked (5) (7lb ex) (D) D Chapman 5-10-7 — A Culhane ●90
2 (4) 253000 Squire Corrie (56) (CD) D Chapman 6-10-0 — J Fanning ★ 87
3 (13) 506020 Polar Mist (5) (C) Mrs N Macauley 3-9-13 — Dean McKeown 86
4 (3) 230100 Miss Mit (6) (D) Miss G Kelleway 3-9-8 — S Whitworth 84
5 (6) 100305 Featherstone Lane (168) (CD) Miss L Siddall 7-9-9 — J Edmunds 85
6 (5) 050001 Pride Of Brixton (18) (CD) P Evans 5-9-7 — Dane O'Neill 89
7 (10) R00000 Russian Romeo (18) (C) B McMahon 3-9-4 — V Halliday ★ 83
8 (2) 603233 Rita's Rock Ape (18) R Brotherton 3-9-2 — A Mackay 87
9 (7) 000003 Miss Barcross (8) (D) C Nelett 3-9-1 — N Carlisle 84
10 (1) 225156 Dande Times (15) (D) K Ivory 3-9-0 — W Ryan ★ 87
11 (9) 6-0065 Balleslifa (29) B Palling 3-8-11 — B Faulkner (3) ★ 83
12 (11) -05005 Sweet Magic (18) (D) L Lloyd-James 7-8-10 — Kimberley Hart (5) 88
13 (12) 000503 Sharp Hint (19) D Nicholls 3-8-8 — Alex Greaves 87

Betting: 5-1 Pride Of Brixton, 6-1 Soaked, 7-1 Sweet Magic, 8-1 Squire Corrie, Rita's Rock Ape, Sharp Hint, 10-1 Polar Mist, Featherstone Lane, Miss Barcross.

Results

NEWTON ABBOT

1.05 (2m 1f Hdle): 1, BEAU, C Llewellyn (7-2); 2, Estate Agent (1-3 fav); 3, Cornwell Gossack (14-1). 8 ran 1¾, 18. (N Twiston-Davies) Tote: £5.10; £2.70, £1.00, £7.10. Dual F: £1.30. CSF: £4.76.

1.35 (2m 110yds Ch): 1, ROYAL TOAST, M A Fitzgerald (9-4); 2, Kingsfold Pet (2-1 fav); 3, Sol Music (7-2). 8 ran 9, 9. (N Henderson) Tote: £4.10; £1.10, £1.40, £1.20. Dual F: £3.60. CSF: £6.84. NR: Advance East.

2.05 (2m 1f Hdle): 1, ELEGANT DES COSSES, Miss P Curling (11-8 fav); 2, The Bosting Brief (33-1); 3, Pridello (6-1). 8 ran Hd, 2½. (P Hobbs) Tote: £2.00; £1.10, £2.80, £1.70. Dual F: £20.80. CSF: £34.20. Tricast: £172.10.

2.35 (3m 2f 110yds Ch): 1, BARONCELLI, W Marston (9-2); 2, True Fortune (7-2); 3, Gigi Beach (11-4 fav). 6 ran 2, 7. (M Wilkinson) Tote: £5.40; £2.80, £2.40. Dual F: £12.50. CSF: £17.29.

3.05 (2m 5f 110yds Ch): 1, ZAGGY LANE, S Burrough (2-1 Fav); 2, Aavasaksa (11-2); 3, Spy Dessa (15-1). 8 ran 5, dist. (P Rodford) Tote: £2.90; £1.50, £2.20, £7.80. Dual F: £5.50. CSF: £13.19. Tricast: £127.48.

3.35 (2m 6f Hdle): 1, WONTCOSTALOTBUT, W Marston (6-4 Fav); 2, Blue Blazer (6-1); 3, Penny Nancy (5-1). 5 ran 2½, 3½. (M Wilkinson) Tote: £2.80; £1.80, £1.60. Dual F: £5.50. CSF: £8.64.

PLACEPOT: £19.40. QUADPOT: £19.10.

NEWCASTLE

12.25 (2m Hdle): 1, LORD LAMB, Mr A Dempsey (evens fav); 2, Tessajoe (5-1); 3, Dee Pee Tee Cee (6-1). 19 ran 2, 25. (Mrs M Reveley) Tote: £1.70; £1.70, £1.40, £1.60. Dual F: £3.40. CSF: £4.58.

12.55 (2m 4f Hdle): 1, KINGENNIE, P Niven (33-1); 2, Ahraydoubleyou (11-2); 3, Datem (14-1). 8-11 fav Noshinannikin. 13 ran 6, 15. (Mrs M Reveley) Tote: £25.20; £4.90, £1.60, £1.30. Dual F: £81.70. CSF: £200.98. NRunner: Chantilly Rose.

1.25 (3m Ch): 1, TOM'S TIP, A Maguire (9-1); 2, Bobby Grant (7-2); 3, Ardent Scout (9-2). 7-4 fav House Captain. 11 ran Nk, 25. (F Murphy) Tote: £9.10; £1.90, £2.00, £2.20. Dual F: £32.20. CSF: £38.09. Trifecta: £318.20.

1.55 (2m Hdle): 1, DAN DE MAN, T Siddall (11-4 jt-fav); 2, Wynyard Lady (11-4 jt-fav); 3, Ralleigie (5-1). 8 ran 4, 4. (Miss L Siddall) Tote: £3.80; £2.20, £1.40. Dual F: £6.90. CSF: £10.21. Tricast: £31.74.

2.25 (3m Hdle): 1, ALPINE PANTHER, P Niven (13-2); 2, Palace of Gold (4-1); 3, Merry Masquerade (5-1). 9-4 fav Cottstown Boy. 8 ran 2, 3. (Mrs M Reveley) Tote: £8.20; £3.00, £1.50, £2.00. Dual F: £20.80. CSF: £30.02. Tricast: £127.98. NR: Johns The Boy.

2.55 (2m 110yds Ch): 1, MOSS PAGEANT, D Parker (20-1); 2, Minster Glory (5-2); 3, Golden Hello (5-1). 15-8 fav Political Tower. 7 ran 7, 8. (F Walton) Tote: £40.40; £5.30, £1.50. Dual F: £22.40. CSF: £57.77. Tricast: £231.58. NR: Battery Fired.

3.25 (2m Flat): 1, TIME OF FLIGHT, P Niven (20-1); 2, Supreme Fortune (20-1); 3, Native Affair (9-4 fav). 21 ran ½, 3½. (Mrs M Reveley) Tote: £17.10; £3.40, £3.40, £1.40. Dual F: £25.80. CSF: £359.26. NRr: Cuchulainn.

JACKPOT: Not won, £3,714.22 carried forward to Catterick.
PLACEPOT: £112.80.
QUADPOT: £30.50

SOUTHWELL

11.40 (1m 3f): 1, SALSUS, Candy Morris (8-1); 2, Prospector's Cove (3-1 fav); 3, Rapten (9-1). 15 ran 1½, 5. (G L Moore) Tote: £11.10; £3.40, £1.70, £5.00. Dual F: £15.90. CSF: £29.02. Tricast: £211.18. NR: Cabcharge Blue.

12.10 (6f): 1, ELTON LEDGER, R Price (8-1); 2, General Klaire (12-1); 3, Thawyer (40-1). 2-1 fav Moet. 13 ran Sh. sh. (Mrs N Macauley) Tote: £9.80; £2.70, £4.80, £6.20. Dual F: £102.50. CSF: £94.39. Tricast: £3,461.68.

12.40 (1m 6f): 1, FAR CRY, Mr C Vigors (4-7 fav); 2, Wild Canary (10-1); 3, Il Principe (4-1). 11 ran 1, 3½. (Sir Mark Prescott) Tote: £1.70; £1.10, £3.20, £1.10. Dual F: £12.60. CSF: £13.08.

1.15 (5f): 1, ADELPHI BOY, A Culhane (7-4); 2, Flying Officer (8-11 fav); 3, Statbee Gal (33-1). 12 ran ½, 4. (M Chapman) Tote: £3.30; £1.10, £1.10, £4.70. Dual F: £1.80. CSF: £3.08.

1.45 (1m): 1, WINDSHIFT, R Winston (25-1); 2, Love Diamonds (2-1 fav); 3, Healthyards Jake (16-1); 4, Almus's Cavalier (20-1). 16 ran 1½, 2½, ¾. (D Shaw) Tote: £41.40; £4.30, £1.30, £2.60, £5.50. Dual Forecast: £90.70. Computer Straight Forecast: £70.87. Tricast: £704.44.

2.15 (6f): 1, THEATRE MAGIC, J Fanning (9-2); 2, Ocker (7-2 fav); 3, Indian Blaze (9-1). 13 ran Hd, 2. (D Shaw) Tote: £4.10; £1.60, £2.00, £4.60. Dual F: £8.70. CSF: £18.10. Tricast: £131.71.

2.45 (7f): 1, SALTY BEHAVIOUR, A Culhane (4-1 jt-fav); 2, Most Respectful (4-1 jt-fav); 3, Zahran (20-1). 18 ran 1, 3½. (P Evans) Tote: £4.90; £1.90, £1.90, £4.70. Dual F: £9.40. CSF: £18.64.

3.15 (1m 3f): 1, DANCING-ALONE, R Studholme (14-1); 2, Yes Keemo Sabee (25-1); 3, Sleeve Silk (12-1); 4, Spa Lane (11-1). 9-4 fav Manful. 16 ran 11, 4. (D Morris).

PLACEPOT: £53.80.
QUADPOT: £5.40.

Football

Newcastle row as Hall enters fray

Julia Finch

A FRESH row broke out at Newcastle United yesterday as the disgraced former directors Douglas Hall and Freddie Shepherd threatened to force their way back on to the board of directors of the plc.

The chairman Denis Cassidy immediately postponed next Monday's annual shareholders' meeting, where the two men were planning to stage their coup.

Hall and Shepherd own 64 per cent of Newcastle United between them but it is understood both the chairman and his fellow independent director John Josephs are prepared to quit the club if they try to rejoin the boardroom. Seven directors have previously walked out on the club since it joined the stock-market 18 months ago.

Cassidy, who accepted the chairman's job only four months ago, is thought to have received a written assurance at the time of his appointment that neither Hall nor Shepherd would seek a return to the board until Newcastle had re-established its reputation as a well-run public company.

They were ousted from the boardroom of Newcastle United plc — the stock-market-listed parent company of Newcastle United FC — nine months ago following a newspaper exposé which revealed the two men had made disparaging remarks about Newcastle United's fans and the women of the north-east.

They were later reinstated as directors of the football club and were instrumental in arranging last week's controversial £8 million signing of Duncan Ferguson from Everton.

Until now their nominees have represented their vast shareholding on the plc board. Douglas Hall, son of the former chairman Sir John Hall, brought in a property consultant, John Fender, to speak for his 57 per cent controlling stake and Freddie Shepherd appointed a local businessman, Tom Fenton.

At the weekend, however, Hall and Shepherd informed Cassidy that they were ready to vote their own nominees off the board at the company's annual shareholders' meeting next Monday and use their shares to reinstate themselves as directors.

Newcastle joined the Stock Exchange in 1997 in a bid to emulate the success of Manchester United. But the team's fortunes on the pitch have since declined and Hall's and Shepherd's vast shareholding has prevented any serious City investors from backing the club.

Last night a source close to the Newcastle boardroom said: "The entire board, including Fenton and Fender, are united in their view on this matter.

"The arrangement was working well and the independent non-executive directors see no reason to change."

The source added that the chairman's threat to quit was real. "Any good non-executive, having exhausted all the possibilities, would eventually say, 'What else can I do but go?'"

Cassidy has a month to reach an agreement, as the postponed annual meeting must take place before the end of this year.



At full stretch . . . Luton's flying goalkeeper Kelvin Davis intercepts a cross while Niall Quinn of Sunderland dives into the thick of the action PHOTOGRAPH: RAOUL DIXON

Worthington Cup, quarter-final: Sunderland 3 Luton Town 0

Bridges and Quinn produce a late kill

Michael Walker

WITHOUT ever coming close to reproducing the coherent, penetrative football which has characterised their season to date, Sunderland nevertheless went through to their first cup semi-final in six years last night.

A deflected headed goal from Andy Melville five minutes before half-time looked to be deciding the tie before Michael Bridges added a second with a composed curling shot one minute from time and Niall Quinn the third just before the end.

Thomas Sorensen, the home goalkeeper, did not make a save all evening, although Luton had a legitimate excuse for their bluntness given that they were reduced to 10 men after only 35 minutes when Mitchell Thomas was sent off for a second bookable offence.

It was only after Thomas's dismissal that Sunderland were able to enforce their superiority, and even then Peter Reid's side were considerably less impressive than when winning on penalties at Everton in the previous round or in scoring four at Sheffield United on Saturday.

Luton's primary task last night was to stop Sunderland scoring. With 59 goals from 26 games, the First Division leaders are the most prolific team in England, but Luton had some inside information from their Sunderland old boy Phil Gray — and a cunning plan.

Recalling his Roker Park days at Sunderland, Gray said that if the away team held out for the first 20 minutes, then the home crowd quickly transmitted its anxiety to the players.

Luton achieved that target without too much difficulty, although any simmering frustration among the home fans at the Stadium of Light was cooled by Sunderland's first shot, from Bridges in the 19th minute, and by their second shortly afterwards.

Quinn could well have scored after accepting a Kevin Ball pass but, after lifting it over his marker Steve Davis, the Irish striker fluffed a left-footed volley.

With their dangerous wingers Allan Johnston and Nicky Summerbee receiving little possession, Sunderland struggled for fluency and the expected siege never materialised. But Luton's confidence was understandably undermined by Thomas's sending off.

Thomas, booked for a boisterous confrontation with the belligerent Ball after 25 minutes, blatantly fouled Quinn 10 minutes later. According to the rules the former Spurs player had to go, but it did seem harsh on Luton. That feeling increased when Sunderland took the lead five minutes later.

It was an ugly goal too, Melville's flicked header from Johnston's cross taking a deflection off the unfortunate Marvin Johnson as it slid past Kelvin Davis.

Johnson's bad luck almost continued after the interval when Summerbee's low cross from from the right ballooned off the centre-half's knee and forced Davis into a nervous sprint across goal.

Quinn and Johnston both had useful efforts after that as Sunderland assumed nonchalant control. Yet there was an alarming lack of urgency from the Wearsiders going forward and that meant Luton were able to make occasional progress upfield of their own.

It resulted in no clear chances, though, and the match, apart from a good reaction save by Davis from Quinn near the end, like the occasion petered out into the most disappointing of anti-climaxes.

Sunderland (4–4–2): Sorensen; Makin, Melville, Butler, Scott; Summerbee, Ball, Clark, Johnston; Quinn, Bridges. Luton Town (4–4–2): K Davis; Alexander, S Davis, Johnson, Thomas; Evers, Spring, McKinnon (McLaren, 71min), McGowan (White, 76); Gray, Douglas (Doherty, 83). Referee E Lomas (Manchester).

Europe's elite stand to milk new league

Timothy Collings in Geneva

THE vision of a revamped Champions League with well-ordered financial arrangements and happy participants moved closer but remained incomplete after yesterday's meeting of Uefa's European Club 2000 task force.

What is clear is that the smaller clubs will earn considerably less than the giants of the European game if yesterday's proposals are adopted.

Some £261 million, representing 75 per cent of the 800 million Swiss francs (£348 million) being promised by Uefa, will be distributed to the participating clubs. But at Uefa's insistence five per cent of that figure will go to their leagues for the development and education of young players. In addition three per cent of the remaining £87 million will be distributed by Uefa among the leagues of the non-participating clubs for the same purpose.

But at less than £3 million this is a paltry amount to share among an estimated 35 leagues. The rest of Uefa's 25 per cent share is earmarked to pay direct costs, agency fees and contributions to the national member associations.

While the bigger clubs will continue to grow the remainder will struggle to keep pace unless they can transform their television "market value", one of the two factors to be used by Uefa in calculating the division of wealth.

This means that clubs from Italy, Germany, Spain and England will claim the lion's share. The other factor is merit and clubs will be rewarded on a payment-per-match basis which will make success a lucrative business.

The gathering, designed to prepare proposals for Uefa's executive committee meeting in Lausanne on December 10–11, satisfied the Premiership's chief executive Peter Leaver and Uefa's general secretary Gerhard Aigner.

"It is slow but steady. I think we are getting there," said Leaver. "It was a fruitful meeting," said Aigner. "I felt there was more confidence from various parties than previously."

Teams who narrowly fail to qualify as one of the initial maximum of four per nation for the Champions League might find themselves in the revamped 96-club Uefa Cup. That is being planned as a knock-out competition and clubs reaching the quarter-finals will guarantee their national league an additional entry the following season.

Juventus defy travel ruling

JUVENTUS yesterday defied Uefa's directive and will travel to Istanbul this morning for the postponed Champions League match against Galatasaray tonight.

Under Uefa's rules teams must travel to match venues the day before an away fixture in Europe and the Italian champions risk disciplinary action by failing to comply.

A brilliant late goal by Raul enabled Real Madrid to add the World Club Cup to the European Cup when they beat Vasco da Gama of Brazil 2–1 in Tokyo. Raul took a long pass, eluded two defenders and curled home a right-foot shot.

Team talk

The independent news and reports service

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Arsenal	60	Derby County	72	Nottm. Forest	85
Aston Villa	61	Everton	73	Oxford	14
Barnsley	62	Fulham	67	QPR	86
Birm. City	63	Grimsby	15	Rangers	87
Blackburn	64	Hudd. Town	74	Reading	89
Bolton	65	Ipswich Town	75	Sheffield United	88
Brentford	66	Leeds United	76	Sheffield Wed.	89
Burnley	67	Leicester City	77	Southampton	90
Bury	11	Liverpool	78	Spurs	91
Celtic	68	Man. City	79	Stoke City	92
Charlton	69	Man. United	80	Stockport	12
Chelsea	69	Middlesbrough	81	Sunderland	93
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Crystal Palace	71	Newcastle Utd	83	West Ham	94
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				Wolves	96

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Strachan awaits call from Rovers

BLACKBURN Rovers' determination to install a new manager before the weekend could well lead them to Gordon Strachan's front door within the next 24 hours, *writes Ian Ross.*

The Coventry City manager moved smartly up the Lancashire club's list of potential successors to the sacked Roy Hodgson yesterday after two other leading candidates were ruled out of contention. Although Blackburn's benefactor Jack Walker is willing to offer his new manager more than £2 million over four years, he is now struggling to find someone suitably qualified.

Walker's personal choice was Brian Kidd but Manchester United's assistant manager will stay at Old Trafford after being informed yesterday that he will not be given permission to open talks with Blackburn. "Blackburn did make an approach but we have denied them permission to speak to Brian," said United's chief executive Martin Edwards.

The former Blackburn captain Colin Hendry was also removed from the equation yesterday. Ten days after indicating that he would definitely be interested in returning to Ewood Park only four months after leaving to join Rangers, Hendry insisted that his future lay in Glasgow. "I am happy to continue my playing career and I intend to do that at Ibrox," he said.

Blackburn's caretaker manager Tony Parkes will be without Chris Sutton for tonight's Worthington Cup quarter-final tie at Leicester. Sutton has completed a four-match ban but is still troubled by a foot injury.

Darren Ferguson, son of Manchester United's manager Alex, is to have a trial with the Italian Serie B club Cosenza with a view to a permanent move. The Wolves manager Colin Lee is ready to let the 26-year-old midfielder leave but he wants to keep Keith Curle and has rejected an approach from Bristol City.

Grantchester throws hat into ring at Everton

Ian Ross

THE battle for control of Everton began in earnest yesterday with potential buyers jockeying for position and Lord Grantchester, the grandson of Everton's former chairman and majority shareholder Sir John Moores, admitting that he is interested.

Grantchester is likely to forge an alliance with his fellow board member Bill Kenwright, who was promoted to vice-chairman in Monday's reshuffle. "As one of the directors I will be involved, with others, to try to find a solution," Grantchester said. "Now whether that includes me isn't easy to say, but it is one option. If there are other people who come forward with a better solution, then I would support them.

"We have to find a way out of this; that is our responsibility. We had come to a situation that we could not endure any longer. Our chairman and manager were no longer able to work together."

As the directors, wealthy supporters, Middle East consortia and media groups began to check their bank balances in readiness for what may prove to be an undignified scramble, the one man who still has it in his remit to shape the future of the Merseyside club was keeping a predictably low profile.

Twenty-four hours after announcing that he had stood down as chairman Peter Johnson was probably more concerned with preparing for a lengthy holiday in the Caribbean than with the fortunes of the club he had promised to restore to greatness.

Although Johnson has indicated that he will offload his 68 per cent shareholding, he is in no great hurry to so do. It seems unlikely he will sanction any formal handover until February at the earliest, when he will reap the tax benefits of having been resident in Jersey for 12 months.

In the interim he may agree in principle to sell his stake should anyone be willing to meet his asking price.

The belief at Goodison Park is that the 59-year-old multi-millionaire would be content to sell his stake around the boardroom table, but that will prove to be a practical solution only if Johnson decides to be dove rather than hawk.

With footballclubs being in a sellers' market at present, Johnson may demand in excess of £80 million for the shares which cost him only £19 million.

Certainly any valuation above £60 million could well prove prohibitive for the Kenwright-Grantchester consortium which will force its way to the head of any queue of purchasers.

As a result of Johnson's decision to stand down and sell up, Everton will shelve their plan to sell Goodison Park and move to a 60,000 all-seat stadium outside Liverpool.

Niall Quinn was reported last night to be the subject of a transfer inquiry by Leeds United. The Elland Road club's manager David O'Leary, a former team-mate of Quinn's at Arsenal and with the Republic of Ireland, is believed to have turned his attention to Quinn after failing to sign Pierre van Hooijdonk from Nottingham Forest for £4.5 million last week.

Quinn, the scorer of nine goals in his last nine matches for Sunderland, is currently in negotiations with the Wearside club over a three-year contract.

Results

Football

FA CUP

First-round replays

Notts County (0) 3 Owers 60 Jones 75, 82 — Hendon (0) 0 2,230

WORTHINGTON CUP

Quarter-finals

Sunderland (1) 3 Johnson 40 (og) Bridges 69 Quinn 80 — Luton (0) 0 35,742

Wimbledon (1) 2 Earle 20 Hughes 75 (pen) — Chelsea (0) 1 Vialli 85 18,286

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

Second Division

Wigan (0) 2 McGibbon 51 Lowe 82 — Fulham (0) 0 3,851

Third Division

Carlisle (0) 0 2,700 — Cardiff (0) 1 Nugent 48 (pen)

Mansfield (0) 1 Peacock 76 — Peterborough (0) 0 3,189

FA TROPHY: Second rounds Doncaster 2 Southport 0; Hayes 3 Welling 2; Morecambe 2 Barrow 0; Stevenage 0 Cheltenham 1; Woking 3 Yeovil 0.

FA VASE: Second rounds Replays Morpeth Tn 0 St Helens Tn 4; Camberley Tn 4 Burgess Hill Tn 0; Yaxley 1 Diss Tn 3.

RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier Division Boreham Wood 1 Harrow Borough 0; Dulwich 0 Carshalton 0. **First Division:** Leatherhead 4 Barton Rvrs 2; Wembley 0 Maidenhead Utd 0. **Second Division:** Bedford Tn 3 Chalfont St Peter 0; Marlow 4 Met Police 3; Thame Utd 4 Wivenhoe Tn 1. **Third Division:** Wingate & Finchley 0 Croydon Ath 1. **Premo Cup: First rounds** Grays Ath 0 Wealdstone 1; Whyteleafe 2 Gravesend & Northfleet 1. **Second rounds:** Whyteleafe 2 Gravesend & Northfleet 1; Enfield 2 St Albans 0.

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division Bamber Bridge 1 Leigh RMI 1; Stalybridge 3 Worksop 0. **First Division:** Flixton 2 Congleton Tn 0. **Challenge Cup: Second rounds** Alfreton Tn 3 Belper Tn 2; Blyth Spartans 3 Bradford PA 1; Lancaster C 1 Trafford 2; Witton Alb 1 Winsford Utd 2. **Replays:** Guiseley 1 Spennymoor Utd 0.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Postponed: Kings Lynn v Atherstone.

N-W TRAINS LEAGUE CUP: First rounds: Maine Rd 2 Atherton LR 0.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE CUP: Second rounds Eccleshill Utd 1 Consett Tn 2.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Les Phillips Cup: Second rounds Melksham Tn 1 Pewsey Vale 0.

PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Liverpool 3 Aston Villa 0. **First Division:** Coventry 0 Middlesbrough 0; Grimsby 0 Oldham 1. **Third Division:** Halifax 2 Chester 3.

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Millwall 2 Portsmouth 1; Tottenham 2 Wycombe 0.

COUNTY ANTRIM SHIELD: First round: Ards 2 Bangor 1 (aet; Ards won on golden goal); Ballyclare 0 Limfield 5; Cliftonville 2 Crusaders 0; Distillery 3 Dunmurry Rec 2; Dungannon Swifts 3 Carrick 1; Glenavon 2 Newry 1; Larne 2 RUC 0.

WORLD CLUB CUP: Final: Real Madrid 2 Vasco da Gama 1.

GERMAN CUP: Quarter-final: Bayern Munich 3 VfB Stuttgart 0.

DUTCH LEAGUE: Heerenveen 3 PSV Eindhoven 3.

Rugby Union

TOUR MATCHES: Ireland A 18 South Africa 50; Leeds 27 Fiji 10.

U-21 REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: England A 19 South Africa 33.

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier Division: Ebbw Vale 24 Llanelli 20; Pontypridd 55 Caerphilly 15.

Bowls

GLASGOW CLASSIC: First rounds: H Duff (Scot) bt G Smith (Eng) 7–5, 7–4; B Creede (Scot) bt G Robertson (Scot) 7–5, 5–7, 7–1; **M McMahon** (Aus) bt D Gurley (Scot) 4–7, 7–5, 7–2; J John Price (Wales) bt R Weale (Wales) 7–2, 7–4.

Chess

WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS (Calicut, India): **Round 13: Boys:** N van der Nat (SA) ½ M Houska(Eng) ½; S Williams(Eng) ½ A Turzo(Hun) ½. **Final scores:** 1. D Sadvakasov (Kaz) 10½ (gold medal); 2, Z Zhong (China) 9½ (silver); 3–4, T Dao (Viet), H Sankas (Gr) 9. Also: Houska 6, Williams 6. **Girls:** A Skeldon (Eng) 0 I Radziewicz (Pol) 1; V Prathiba (Ind) ½ J Houska (Ind) ½. **Final scores:** 1, T Hoang (Viet) 10½ (gold); 2, Radziewicz 9½ (silver); 3, I Krush (US) 9 (bronze). Also: Skeldon 7, Houska 6.

American Football

NFL: San Francisco 31 NY Giants 7.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Montreal 3 Los Angeles 1.

Squash

WORLD OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP (Doha, Qatar): **Second round: P Johnson** (Eng) bt C Rowland (Aus) 17–14, 15–10, 15–12; **M Barrett** (Eng) bt S Davis (Aus) 15–8, 15–12, 15–2; **A Hill** (Aus) bt T Lincou (Fr) 15–5, 15–8, 13–15, 12–15, 15–14; **G Rydings** (Can) bt A Khan (Pak) 15–10, 16–13, 15–11; **L Beachill** (Eng) bt M Galmo (Eng) 15–13, 15–11, 15–8; **S Haddrell** (Aus) bt J Wellings (Eng) 12–15, 15–13, 9–15, 15–11, 15–14; **D Harris** (Eng) bt C Tomlinson (Eng) 15–9, 15–5, 15–6; **S Parke** (Eng) bt O El Borolossy (Egypt) 15–12, 15–10, 15–13; **P Wood** (Scot) bt A Wagih (Egypt) 15–6, 15–9, 15–13; **S Cornelson** (Bel) bt R Eyles (Aus) 12–15, 15–10, 15–13, 17–16; **C Walker** (Eng) bt D Evans (Wales) 15–11, 13–15, 15–8, 15–8; **J White** (Scot) bt D Jenson (Aus) 15–11, 15–12, 12–15, 15–17, 15–10; **T Hands** (Eng) bt D Palmer (Aus) 13–15, 15–13, 15–7, 15–7; **A Gough** (Wales) bt N Taylor (Eng) 15–6, 15–13, 15–5; **A Barada** (Egypt) bt M Heath (Scot) 15–6, 14–17, 15–11, 15–7; **J Power** (Can) bt T Garner (Eng) 15–13, 15–13, 15–8.

Fixtures

(7.45 unless stated)

Football

WORTHINGTON CUP: Quarter-finals: Leicester v Blackburn; Tottenham v Man Utd.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First Division: Norwich v Grimsby; QPR v Ipswich.

EUROPEAN CUPS: Champions' League Group B: Galatasaray v Juventus.

FA VASE: Second round replays Porthleven v Brislington (7.30).

RYMAN LEAGUE: First Division: Braintree Tn v Uxbridge (7.30); Molesey v Canvey Island (7.30). **Wanderers Trophy: Second rounds** Harlow Tn v Aveley (7.30).

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Midland Division: Newport AFC v Paget Rngrs (7.30). **Cup: First-round, second legs:** Ellistown Tn v Worcester C (7.30); Paget Rngrs v Shepshed Dyn (7.30).

N-W TRAINS LEAGUE: Floodlit Trophy: First rounds: Skelmersdale Utd v Woodley Sports (7.30). **First-round, second legs:** Nantwich Tn v Leek CSOB (7.30). **Second rounds:** Darwen v Vauxhall GM (7.30).

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE: First Division: Bedlington Ter v South Shields (7.30); Billingham Tn v Easington (7.30).

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Tiverton Tn v Paulton Rvrs (7.30).

PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Birmingham v Everton (7.15); Preston v Sunderland (7.15). **First Division:** Barnsley v Wolverhampton (7.0); Burnley v Bolton (7.15); Tranmere v Man City (7.15); West Brom v Sheff Wed (7.0). **Second Division:** Shrewsbury v Blackpool (7.0); Stockport v Scarborough (7.0); Wrexham v Bradford C (7.0); Rotherham v Notts County (7.0). **Third Division:** Darlington v Scunthorpe (7.0); Hull v Hartlepool (2.0); Rochdale v Chesterfield (2.0).

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Brentford v Peterborough (2.0); Charlton v Barnet (7.0); Colchester v Watford (7.30); Crystal Palace v Cambridge (7.30); Gillingham v Brighton (2.0); Swindon v Reading (7.15); Wimbledon v Bournemouth (7.30).

HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Deveronvale v Fraserburgh (3.0); Lossiemouth v Clachnacuddin (7.30); Rothes v Fort William (7.30).

Rugby Union

WORLD CUP EUROPEAN QUALIFYING ZONE: Pool Three: Spain v Portugal (8.0, Murrayfield).

AIB LEAGUE: Second Division: Wanderers v DLSP (7.0).

HART GILMORE NORTH MIDLANDS CHAMPIONSHIP: Gtr Birmingham v Shropshire (7.30, O Saltelians).

Sport in brief

Tennis

Chris Wilkinson, Martin Lee and David Sherwood will represent Great Britain in the European Men's Team Championship in Monte Catini, Italy, from December 14 to 20. Jeremy Bates captains the team which will be attempting to win the Champions Division for the second successive year.

Boxing

The four-times world champion Terry Norris has announced his retirement only 12 hours after failing to win the WBA light-middleweight title in Paris. The American was stopped in the ninth round by the Frenchman Laurent Boudouani. It was his third successive defeat.

Snooker

Anthony Hamilton will play in next week's German Masters following the withdrawal of the world No. 3 Ronnie O'Sullivan. Hamilton faces Stephen Lee in the first round and Lee's original opponent, Mark Williams, takes O'Sullivan's quarter-final place.

Bowls

Hugh Duff of Scotland got the home challenge off to a perfect start when the top 16 bowlers in the world launched the Glasgow Classic, *writes Ron Wyllie.* Duff, ranked world No. 1, defeated England's international skip Gary Smith 7–5, 7–4.

Duff, twice world indoor champion, will now meet the three-times world title-holder Richard Corsie in the quarter-finals after the Edinburgh player defeated Graham Robertson 7–5, 5–7, 7–1.

Motor Racing

Michael Schumacher returns to the Ferrari cockpit in Barcelona today boosted by the Italian team's test driver Luca Badoer outpacing McLaren's David Coulthard in the first day of winter testing yesterday. Badoer lapped the Circuit de Catalunya in a time of 1min 24.22sec to edge out the Scot by three hundredths of a second.

Rugby Union

Portugal have changed over half the side thrashed by Scotland for their World Cup meeting with Spain at Murrayfield tonight. Only three of the XV which started last weekend begin in the same positions against the Spanish. The Australian-born Rohan Hoffman, who scored the only try against the Scots, switches from centre to full-back for a match that will see the winners qualify for the finals next autumn.

Basketball

England's coach Laszlo Nemeth fears the conditions in the Ukraine will undermine his team's chances in their European Championship qualifier in Kiev today to keep alive their hopes of reaching Paris next summer for the finals. But sub-zero temperatures in hotel rooms and bad food are making preparations difficult.

"My players are in a psychological war in Kiev," Nemeth admitted. "I fear for my players' frame of mind because some of them are enduring things they have never faced. They have to sleep with all of their clothes on because the rooms are below-freezing. It is minus 14 degrees (Fahrenheit) outside."

هكذا من الأصل

Cricket

Mike Selvey in Perth says England's great enigma, enjoying his seventh recall to the colours, is still to convince under true Test pressure

Hick keeps his foot in the door

THE doors to the England cricket team swing open and shut these days like those of the Golden Horseshoe during happy hour in Dodge City.

One minute Alex Tudor is the raw recruit on an educational tour, the next he is a star; Mark Butcher cannot buy a run, then plays, in the circumstances, one of the great Ashes innings and now cannot get a run again; and John Crawley and Graeme Hick are playing musical chairs once more as they did at the back end of the summer.

Until a couple of days ago Hick's status, according to Alec Stewart, remained strictly as a cover for Mike Atherton, just as it had been in Brisbane. And with Atherton fit again, he was all but on the plane back home, set to do a bit of benefit organising before making the journey back here for the one-day series in the new year.

Instead, in the wake of his last-ditch innings in Perth on Sunday evening and the worrying condition of Graham Thorpe's back, not only is he now regarded as a *bona fide* member of the touring party but he has probably overtaken the unfortunate Crawley in the pecking order.

Yesterday in Perth, where the team were enjoying a spot of post-Test R and R, the England tour manager Graham Gooch confirmed that Hick would be staying put while at the same time expressing his concern about Thorpe's condition, which caused him to pull out of the second Test.

The Surrey batsman missed the one-day series at the end of last winter's Caribbean tour because of back trouble and, after surgery, the last three Tests of the summer, returning only for Surrey's final championship match of the season.

Sensibly he has been nursed on this trip and has responded with an unbeaten double century and two half centuries, one of those undefeated as well, in the six innings he has played to date. Of all the batsmen in the party he is the only one with a commendable track record against Australia.

"There is some uncertainty about his condition," Gooch admitted, "and it was sensible to keep Hick here until after the third Test in Adelaide. He was due back here shortly after that in any case.

"Thorpe saw a specialist on Saturday and has had physiotherapy. It does not appear to be the same condition as he suffered in the summer but we still do not know how he will shape up. He will be having a net session here and another in Melbourne on Friday. But, if the trouble persists, we will certainly have to review the situation."

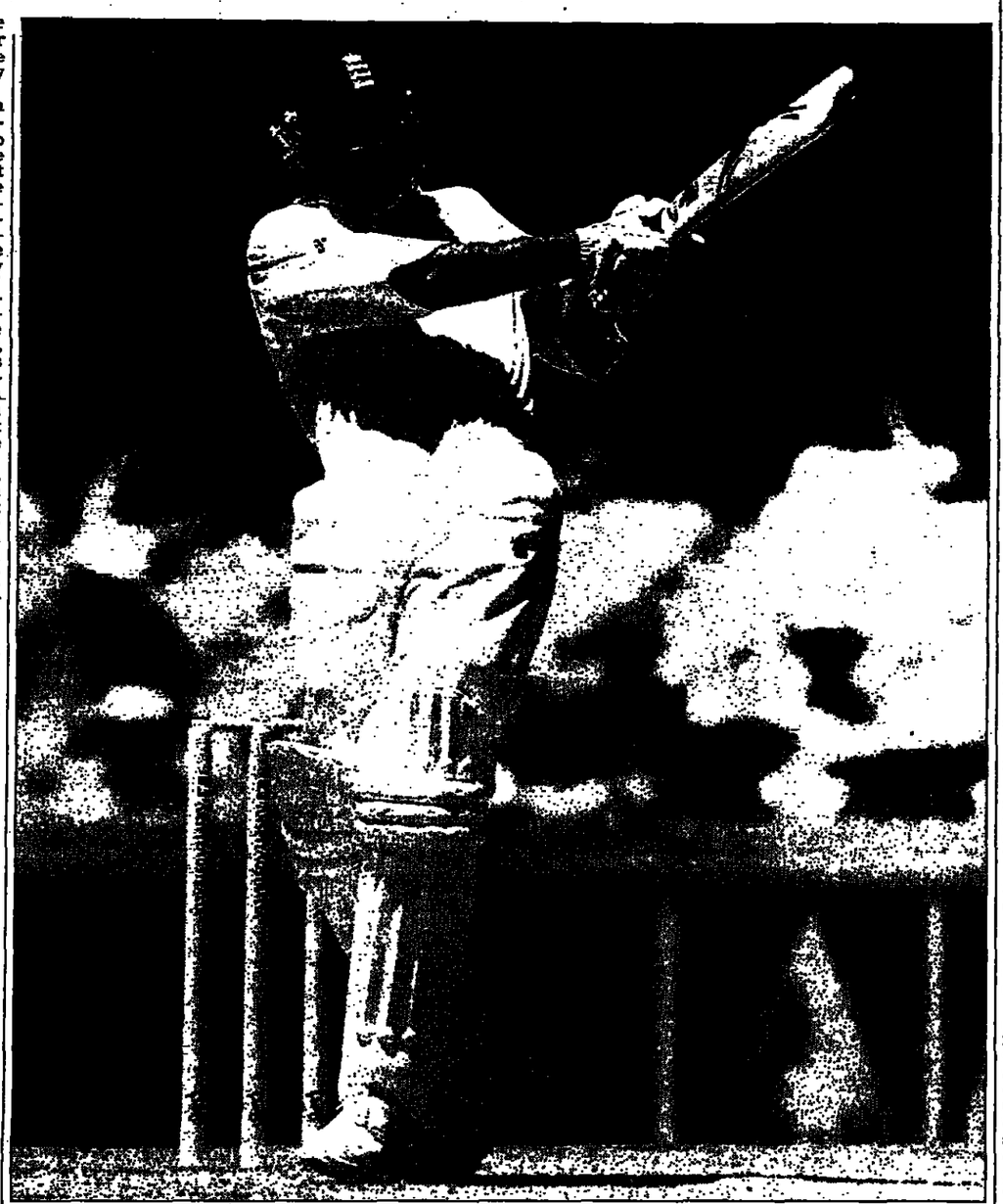
Hick's resurgence is unlucky for Crawley who, having played as well as anyone in the early part of the tour, batted poorly in both innings in Perth. Quite how psychologically damaging has been the assault he suffered in Cairns is anyone's guess but he does not look the same batsman.

It would be wrong, though, to place too much store on Hick's innings, exhilarating though it was, simply because of the combination of circumstances surrounding it. When Hick went to the crease, England were 67 for five in their second innings, still 61 shy of making Australia bat a second time.

He was on his seventh recall to the side strictly as a makeweight, batting in the twilight zone at seven, had dropped two catches, one of them relatively straightforward for a catcher of his quality, and made a hapless second-ball nought in the first innings.

The game was shot and so, it seemed yet again, was Hick's international future. There was not an awful lot for him to lose and so he played as he did. For 33 balls on Sunday evening, as he tore into Australia's fastest bowler and twice dumped him high over midwicket, it was glorious and unconstrained. But next morning, when the adrenalin had dissipated and the faint glimmer of hope in the game began to appear, he needed to think about it.

The more he did, the more the storm subsided. It had been fantastic uninhibited stuff but it was not an innings that could have been played from the upper order in the first innings of a match. And that should be the acid test of a Hick resurrection.



Hick in nick . . . Damien Fleming is struck for four but a fine innings of 68 was too little too late to save England BEN CURTIS

Counties to vote for two divisions

David Hopps on why the meeting at Lord's will agree an up-and-down future

ENGLISH county cricket will embrace the more competitive era it has come to accept as paramount for its survival when the First-Class Forum opts over the next two days to confront a new century with a two-divisional championship.

The county game has prided itself on being an escape from the excesses of the real world. But in the winter meeting at Lord's starting today it will pronounce itself attuned to the spirit of the times by introducing promotion and relegation by 2000.

Two years of lobbying will finally bear fruit for Lord MacLaurin, chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, when, barring a remarkable eleventh-hour change of heart, the counties will support two divisions by a sizeable majority. The alternative, an additional tier of regional cricket, seems to have little support.

Only a year ago MacLaurin suffered a mortifying reversal when the first-class counties privately expressed their resistance to such a restructuring and then rejected a muddled compromise, based on an American-style Conference system, that brought widespread ridicule.

Now most counties accept that "promotion and relegation" are the necessary buzzwords to arouse interest, not only among a sceptical younger audience but within a contemptuous, football-driven media.

Somerset are one county expected to switch their vote in favour of two divisions. Their secretary Peter Anderson expressed the prevalent view when he explained: "People have woken up to the marketing facts. County cricket has a loyal membership but it is not being replenished; and every newspaper, whether it is cribbage, darts or go-kart racing, likes to talk about promotion and relegation."

Assurances of financial safeguards have also convinced the weakest first-class counties that all 18 of them remain sacrosanct and that there is no desire to hurry some into bankruptcy in the name of a "leaner and fitter" first-class circuit.

Derbyshire are one small county to have abandoned their resistance. Their chairman Vic Brownett said: "We needed to have the financial safety net and we are happy that is the case. A new TV deal has brought nearly double our previous income and, understandably, Sky and Channel 4 want the most attractive game possible."

Glamorgan's committee were expected last night to restate their opposition to two divisions but even their secretary Mike Fatkin recognised the need "to be pragmatic and enter the debate". Counties

> Promotion and relegation are the necessary buzz-words to arouse interest

such as Glamorgan will rely on the adoption of three up and three down, a large turnover in two divisions of nine, to curb pressure for an open transfer system.

England's best players, in any event, will be concerned with an extended programme of seven Tests and six or seven one-day internationals every summer; considering such demands, the move to them being centrally contracted by the board looks inevitable.

Two divisions is no panacea. It is not only implacable opponents who fear a more desperate need for victories will risk an increase in sub-standard pitches or reduce opportunities for young players.

But, as Lancashire's secretary Dave Edmundson pointed out: "The players are 75 per cent in favour of change and some of the influence has come from them. Committees have had to take notice of those who play the game."

ANC hits out at 'lily-white' teams

SOUTH AFRICA's ruling African National Congress party has stoked the controversy over the racial make-up of the country's rugby and cricket national teams by labelling them "lily-white".

The intervention came after the Sports Minister Steve Tshwete was criticised by opposition parties for saying that he was "fed up" that the two sides were almost exclusively white.

"Nobody can dispute that both rugby and cricket national teams remain lily-white," the ANC said in a statement, "despite the fact that calls for their transformation were made more than five years ago.

"In cricket Makhaya Ntini and Paul Adams have proved themselves beyond any doubt, yet the national selectors left them out in the cold for the Test against the West Indies for the flimsiest of reasons."

Peter Pollock, the convenor of selectors, defended the "all-white" squad when it was announced by saying it was picked purely on merit.

South Africa's cricketers beat West Indies for the first time in a Test on Monday and the rugby Springboks aim to complete a grand slam and break the world record of 17 consecutive international victories when they play England on Saturday.

Tshwete was also reported as saying that the government would name a special commission next year to intervene to promote black players into national squads, a policy criticised by the opposition National Party as posing "a serious threat to the bright future of South African sport" and as being "inherently racist".

The ANC responded by accusing the National Party of persistently defending white racism in sport.

Sohail's remarks rile Pakistan selectors

PAKISTAN's chairman of selectors Wasim Bari yesterday responded to criticism by the captain Aamir Sohail, saying that on performance alone the opening bat was not worth his place in the Test side.

The captain's decision to air his views has also been brought to the attention of the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman, Wasim added.

"I don't know yet if we would be lodging a complaint against Sohail. The man is under pressure and is desperately trying to safeguard his captaincy. On performance, I am sorry to say, he doesn't get into the team. The only way he can retain his place is as captain."

Sohail, who made 15 and two in the seven-wicket defeat by Zimbabwe at Peshawar on Monday, which followed a 1-0 series home defeat by Australia, said after the latest match that the selectors were "inconsistent, did not visit grounds and do not give me the players of my choice".

Sohail has also been the target for scathing criticism from the media. Jang, a mass-circulation Urdu daily, said: "All this is happening because of a foolish decision of the cricket administrators who appointed Sohail as captain.

"The skipper doesn't command respect over his players. And he can't because 20 months back he had levelled betting and match-fixing allegations against his team-mates."

The Daily News newspaper, which tipped the wicketkeeper Moin Khan to replace Sohail for the remaining two Tests, said: "Sohail is not a motivator to the team. His own performance doesn't merit a selection in the team."

Cycling

Virenque fights the fire

William Fotheringham

RICHARD VIRENQUE continued his fight to protect his name and career yesterday after the judge investigating drug-taking in the Festina team told him that tests showed he had used banned drugs.

The Frenchman has maintained his innocence since July 8 when French customs officers on the Belgian border impounded a Festina car conveying a supply of steroids, growth hormone and the blood-boosting erithropoietin (EPO) destined for the Tour de France.

Virenque's personal masseur and team manager maintain in their testimonies that they supplied and injected him with drugs. Yesterday he seemed not to believe the evidence presented by Judge Patrick Keil.

"All the biological parameters and tests prove scientifically that I am not doped," Virenque said after leaving the judge's office in Lille. He added that the report "reveals no trace of steroids, growth hormone, corticoids, amphetamines or masking products".

Virenque's defence in the on-going investigation rests partly on the fact that his blood-solid (haematocrit) level was just below the 50 per cent limit which the International Cycling Union considers healthy. A high haematocrit level can indicate the use of EPO. One of the report's authors, Dr François Bressolle, pointed out that Virenque's level of 49.2 per cent was still far higher than the average of 42-44 per cent.

Bressolle maintained that additional scientific evidence, based on the level of a protein, transferin, proved Virenque had taken EPO. But Virenque is adamant that the report and the investigation are a plot to destroy him.

"If you are objective, you will take into account the undeniable biological parameters which prove I'm innocent," he said. "But if you want to bring me down, then you will take into account the biased interpretation.

"Today I'm relieved. I'm sure this is the end of a nightmare." But it may instead prove to be the end of his career. Virenque has been sacked by Festina and his only serious option for next year, the Italo-Belgian team sponsored by the Mapei chemicals company, depends on him being "clean".

Rugby League

Luyt plans new use for Ellis Park

Andy Wilson

LOUIS LUYT, the controversial former president of the South African Rugby Football Union, has offered to stage major rugby league fixtures at Ellis Park, the Springbok citadel in Johannesburg.

Luyt is attending the meeting of the newly formed Rugby League International Federation in Sydney and yesterday submitted proposals to promote rugby league in South Africa, including providing the pre-season World Nines with a long-term home.

Luyt was overthrown as Sarfu's president this year after Nelson Mandela had ordered an inquiry into corruption and racism within the organisation but he retains a major financial interest in Ellis Park and is keen to maximise its use.

Neil Tunnicliffe, the chief executive of the Rugby Football League, gave Luyt's offer a cautious welcome. "South Africa has the potential to become a major league power," he said, "but the federation has to be convinced that the terms are right."

If it is convinced, league could be staged at Ellis Park as early as next year, as Luyt has offered the stadium on the weekend of February 6-7 for the World Nines. Luyt's chances are enhanced by the stalemate between Wigan and the Brisbane Broncos over the proposed World Club Championship. Australian sources suggest that it is unlikely to go ahead.

The federation also confirmed the itinerary for next autumn's Tri-Nations series. Great Britain will play Australia in Brisbane on October 22 and New Zealand in Auckland the following Friday. The final will take place at Sydney's new, 120,000-seat Olympic Stadium on November 5. Matches will be coupled with curtain-raisers.

The go-ahead for the 2000 World Cup in Europe is expected to be given by the federation today. The competition will feature 16 teams, including all four home nations and the newcomers Italy and Russia.

The Adelaide Rams, owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Limited, were disbanded yesterday. Murdoch established the Rams in the Australian Rules stronghold of South Australia as part of his rebel Super League competition in 1995. The Rams have effectively been sacrificed as a cost-cutting measure, with the Gold Coast Chargers expected to go the same way today.

Gateshead Thunder have beaten off competition from several other Super League clubs to sign Brian Carney, the 23-year-old winger who was outstanding for Ireland in the recent internationals against France and Scotland.

1998 TRI-NATIONS SERIES: October 18: New Zealand v Australia (Auckland); October 25: Australia v Great Britain, New Zealand v. New Zealand Maoris or Papua New Guinea (Brisbane); October 29: New Zealand v Great Britain, Australia v Western Samoa or Fiji (Auckland); November 8: Final, third-placed team v Tonga or Cook Islands (Sydney).

Squash

Angry Eyles reported to his presidential self

Richard Jago in Doha

THE world champion Rodney Eyles is to be reported to the Professional Squash Association, of which he is the president, after losing both his title and his temper yesterday.

The 31-year-old Australian hurled the ball angrily at the referee Jack Allen immediately after his 12-15, 15-10, 15-13, 17-16 defeat in the second round to the unseeded Belgian Stefan Casteleyn.

"There is no need for that," Allen called to Eyles, who had spent two games berating him and criticising his decisions.

The incident is not an uncommon spectacle but this week there has been something of an outbreak that suggests the sport is drifting too far in favour of the players.

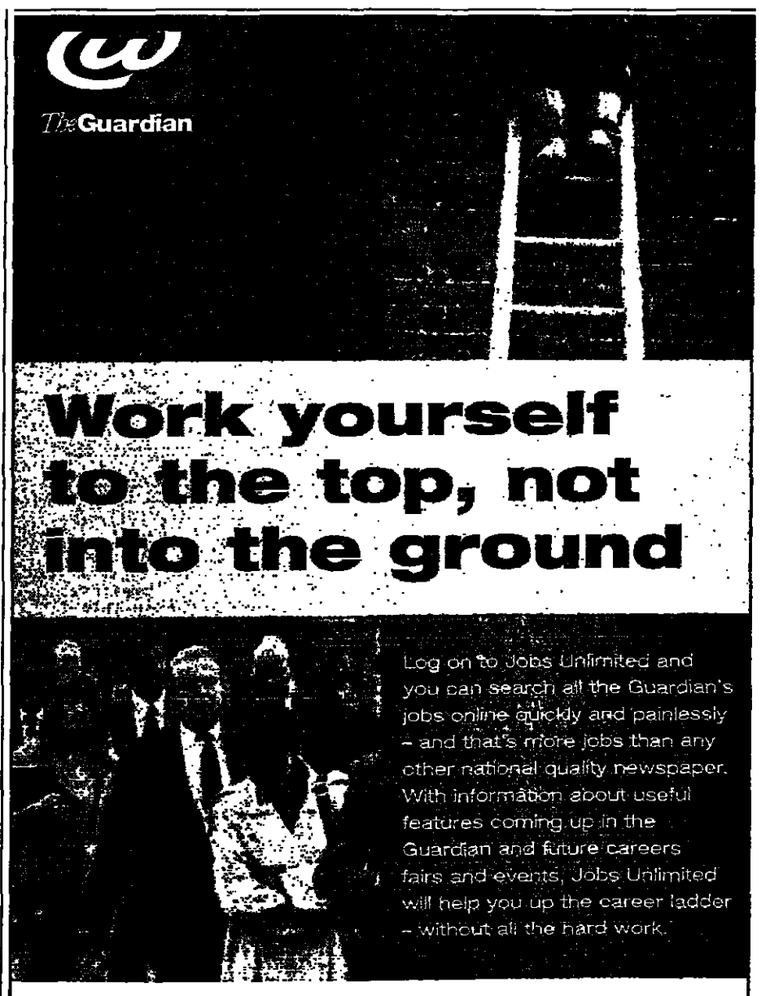
Allen certainly made mistakes but no more than might have been expected in a high-pressure match played more than usual in the front part of the court.

Casteleyn, who took advantage of Eyles's difficulty in reaching the ball on a deadish court, said: "There were mistakes on a couple of crucial points but it was not easy and I am not going to criticise. I don't think Rodney would if he had won."

The upset further cleared the top half of the draw of well-known names for Scotland's Peter Nicol, whose campaign to be the first British player to become world champion was carried to the third round with a second successive straight-games win.

The world No.1 beat the Egyptian Amir Wagih 15-6, 15-9, 15-13, though Nicol says he still does not feel completely settled on the court.

Four seeds were defeated, the others being the Australians Dan Jenson and Byron Davis, and Mark Cairns of England, making six beaten in the tournament so far.



Fresh boardroom row at Newcastle, page 14

England hang on to Hick, page 15

SportsGuardian

Wimbledon give holders the blues



All you need is gloves . . . Marcus Gayle, the Wimbledon striker, makes an acrobatic effort as Bernard Lambourde clears the danger at Selhurst Park PHOTOGRAPH: STU FORSTER

Worthington Cup, quarter-final: Wimbledon 2 Chelsea 1

Chelsea dive after Earle's pearl

Martin Thorpe

WIMBLEDON knocked the holders out last night to reach their third semi-final in two seasons. As a result Chelsea suffered their first defeat in 20 games, missing out on a club record by one match.

Despite a late consolation from Gianluca Vialli, goals in each half from Robbie Earle and Michael Hughes, with a penalty, took Wimbledon into tonight's draw, looking to do better than their semi-final defeats in the FA Cup and this competition two seasons ago.

Wimbledon got off to a great start, going ahead after just 19 minutes as the Chelsea defence appeared frozen to the spot by the bitter night air. Neil Ardley swung in a cross which the visiting back line watched sail over apparently expecting their goalkeeper to come and claim the ball. But, fatally, Dmitre Kharine stayed on his line and Earle, running in, scored with the easiest of headers from six yards.

The goal was just reward for Wimbledon's more organised and competitive early approach as they made light of Chelsea's plan to boss the crucial central area by stringing five men across midfield. But numbers could not compete with commitment and three minutes after taking the lead Wimbleon went extremely close to extending it.

Frank Leboeuf, reflecting Chelsea's tentativeness, underhit a back pass to Kharine but Carl Leaburn shot wide from the dge of the area when a pass inside to the unmarked Marcus Gayle offered a more threatening option.

After beating understrength Aston Villa and Arsenal sides in the previous rounds, Chelsea's habit of fielding predominantly squad players in this tournament was in danger of being exposed by a full-strength Wimbledon, who welcomed back Hughes after suspension.

Not even the return of Dennis Wise, Chelsea's own bad boy, after a four-game ban, could lift a team showing seven changes from last Saturday's draw with Sheffield Wednesday. Vialli was a striker alone as much as a lone striker as his midfield, despite their numbers, struggled to communicate with him.

Vialli had scored five goals for Chelsea in the previous rounds. As Neil Sulivan, Wimbledon's keeper, walked in at half-time, his gloves were hardly soiled. Vialli's response was to give himself a striking partner, bringing on Tore Andre Flo for Bjarne Goldbaek.

After such a poor first half, Chelsea's all-white strip had taken on the appearance of a flag of surrender. But Vialli's team brought renewed vigour to the new half and for the first time in the game went close to scoring. Gustavo Poyet shot just wide from 18 yards, then headed straight at Sullivan from close range.

Wimbledon, however, continued to pose a threat. On 51 minutes Hughes cut in from the left side of the area and fired in a stinging shot which Kharine failed to hold. The keeper was then forced to react quickly as the Wimbledeon forwards closed in, kicking the ball away while lying on the ground.

As the game progressed, however, the more fractious it became with Graham Poll dishing out his fourth yellow card on 65 minutes — all four to home players.

Chelsea brought on Roberto di Matteo for Jody Morris, hoping his experience might lead to an equaliser. Instead, Wimbledon increased their lead. Leboeuf was adjudged to have fouled Gayle, for which he was booked, and Hughes converted the penalty.

Wimbledon (4-4-2)**:** Sullivan; Cunningham, Perry, Blackwell, Thatcher; Hughes, Ardley, Ewell, Earle; Gayle, Leaburn (Ekoku, 73min).

Chelsea (4-5-1)**:** Kharine; Lambourde, Doberty (Ferrer, 76), Leboeuf, Babayaro; Petrescu, Goldbaek (Flo, h-t), Wise, Morris (Di Matteo, 70), Poyet; Vialli.

Referee: G Poll (Tring).

The English art of getting it wrong



Matthew Engel

THE England cricket team made many mistakes during the Perth Test but perhaps the biggest was having their terrible day on Saturday. This means that instead of getting reported in the daily papers, who know that tomorrow is another day, they were right in the firing line for the Sundays, who fired the entire munitions dump at them.

English cricket is sensitive to such matters these days. Little more than a year ago its ruling body, the ECB, had only one media man and he rarely spoke to journalists. Now it is going to the other extreme.

Tomorrow the great transformation of county cricket into a two-division Championship is expected to be announced. This change, for the year 2000, is entirely media-driven, pushed through by a chairman, Lord MacLaurin, desperate to be seen by the press to be doing something, and wearily accepted by county chairmen tired of being called names all the time for resisting it.

In cricketing terms the advantages of such a switch are heavily outweighed by the disadvantages. Promotion and relegation will be a spurious element in the season, creating club-country conflict and forcing the counties into short-term manoeuvring rather than long-term development of players. Giving kids a chance will be to court relegation.

From 2000 England will be playing seven Tests and six or seven one-day internationals a summer, which means the top cricketers will take almost no part in the Championship. It is thus meaningless as a competition. In the longish term there is the danger that cricket will disappear as a spectator sport from large chunks of the country.

The move is expected to encourage sponsorship (maybe), media coverage (a fraction, perhaps) and crowds (it won't). Optimists think it will make county cricket more competitive. Yes, but in the wrong way: counties will duck and dive for advantage, not to deliver Test players. This is a rotten idea, but it is a rotten idea whose time has come.

Sports are best served when they are run by people who actually know what they think. Under pressure the England management in Australia is also starting to wobble. In August the selectors worked out their balance and strategy, talking long and hard before preferring John Crawley to Graeme Hick. No new facts have emerged since then except that Alex Tudor has developed quicker than expected and Dominic Cork has regressed.

England were always likely to be walloped in Perth. The miracle is that they are only 1–0 down coming to the less hostile pitches of the remaining Tests, where they might nick a victory. But now nobody's sure of anything any more. Oooh, they are thinking, wasn't Hick impressive? Maybe we should play seven batsmen . . . Hick played marvellously in the second innings. This was just the situation in which he always plays marvellously, when there is no pressure at all; the game was already effectively kaput. In the first innings, when he could have made a difference to the result, he failed.

He has always failed in those situations, with the possible exception of the Bombay Test in 1992–93 (six long winters ago), when he made 178 but England lost anyway.

THE next Test, nine days hence, is at the Adelaide Oval, which is egg-shaped, with long straight boundaries but short square ones. Thus anyone who bowls short gets clattered off the back foot, especially by Australian batsmen. That means England need bowlers who can pitch the ball up, even at the risk of being driven down the ground. That means bringing back Angus Fraser and Robert Croft. Anyway, haven't we learned by now? Dropping Fraser Is Always Wrong.

It is also likely to be hot and dry, which means having five front-line bowlers: Four will get knackered; four of our lot will anyway. It is also likely to favour batsmen. If the six top batsmen in England play, and they all fail, then we deserve to lose the Ashes, simple as that. Playing seven is simply pathetic. Like so much else in English cricket.

More cricket, page 15

Belle of the ball club strikes £45m deal

WHO says nice guys win? The baddest man in sport, the baseball superstar Albert Belle, yesterday walked into a £45 million deal with the Baltimore Orioles which will earn him a tidy £750,000 a week for five years.

Belle, described by his biographer as "the most thoroughly maladjusted personality ever to pass across American sports", has a violent and foul-mouthed CV in which opponents, reporters and even autograph-hunters have fallen victim.

His Tysonesque behaviour has led to a $50,000 fine for verbally abusing a woman TV reporter, a suspension for flattening a Milwaukee baseman and a Hallowe'en night car chase with children after they threw eggs at his house.

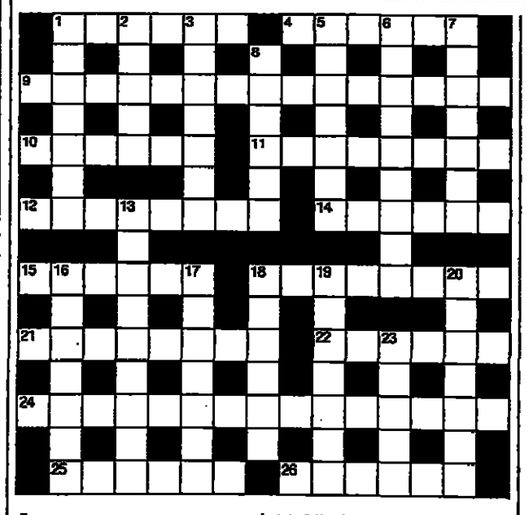
But, with more than 330 career home runs to his name, his earning power is still on the rise, despite confessions of heavy gambling and charges of domestic assault in July which were later dropped.

Just a week after the Premiership bad 'un Duncan Ferguson completed a £40,000-a-week deal with Newcastle, the Americans proved yesterday that whatever we do, they can do much, much bigger.

Not only is Belle naughtier than Ferguson, he will now be 20 times richer. He walked out on Chicago White Sox hours after a clause in his contract — which stated he must be one of the three highest-paid players — came into effect, after Randy Johnson's new $52.4 million, four-year deal with Arizona.

Guardian Crossword No 21,447

Set by Araucaria



Across

1 Arrive on a leaving day? That's funny (5)
4 On the left I'm talking of a pact (3-3)
9 French city backed Italian one in money-making with larks? (5,3,7)
10 Avocet fluttering from A to A, perhaps (5)
11 Offer for consideration of the Eurosceptic? (8)
12 Exist without someone to wait on one? I shine! (5, 3)
14 Model in island in search of a heart (3,3)
15 Couturière takes heart from broadcasters (5)
18 Wicked city built by ram or hog (8)
21 Charge less for tenderloin? (8)
22,24 Impartial, as Murdoch paper was to rebellion after 9, with ill-used maiden's song (4,2,3,3,3,6)
25 Bird around the Dardanelles (5)
26 Periodical means of communication has its attraction (5)

Down

1 Part of church with its top in 15 (7)
2 French gentleman on island with saucy singer (5)
3 Do I turn to see, so to say — see, it's out of order, see? (7)
5 Settle differences — get it for decreasing? (4,3)
6 Country gentleman has depressing experience after long article (9)
7 Dickens entertaining grandmother to a load of new money (7)
8 Religious building goes ahead (6)
13 Charge store, a scam for the less intelligent (9)
16 Worker with great enthusiasm for washing woollens? (4,3)
17 Permission for permissiveness? (7)
18 Rich food at the Golden Gate? (6)
19 Island takes up "Preserve the killer whale!" (7)
20 Range of the month in opposition (7)
23 Poles keep country girl with 12 (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,446

C	U	S	T	A	R	D		P	A	G	E	A	E	T
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SUTTER HOME

CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAY

*

Perfect with soy-braised sea bass & wilted pak choi.



SUTTER HOME

CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAY

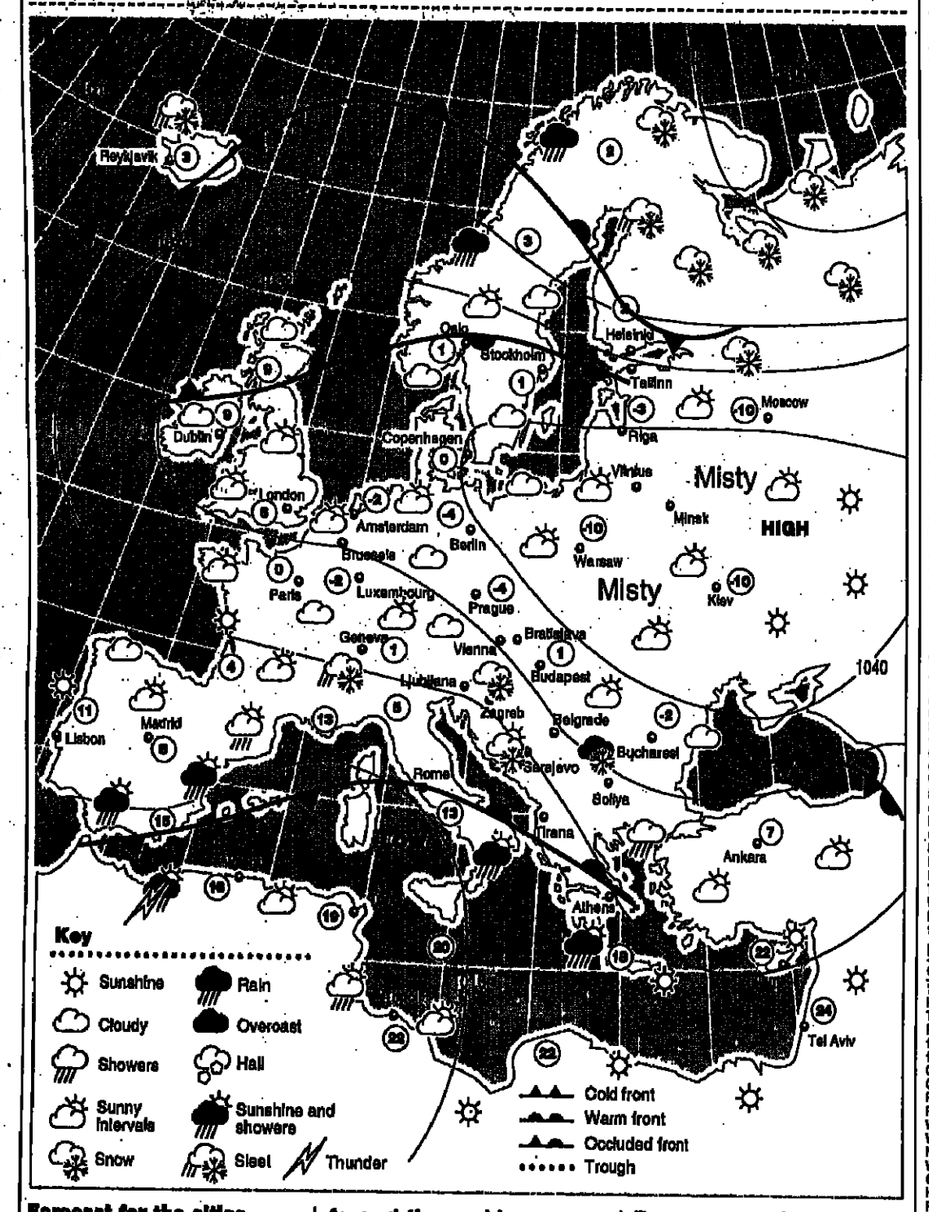
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Perfect without soy-braised sea bass & wilted pak choi.



SUTTER HOME CALIFORNIA WINES.
They don't need food to make sense.

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	16	5	F
Amsterdam	-2	-2	Sn
Athens	17	12	Sh
Berlin	-1	-7	F
Bonn	1	-5	F
Brussels	0	-5	F
Copenhagen	0	-5	F
Crete	18	13	S
Geneva	3	-2	C
Larnaca	22	12	S
London	6	1	F
Madrid	9	0	F
Milan	6	3	Sh
Nice	13	7	F
Oslo	1	-1	F
Paris	0	-3	F
Rome	13	8	Sh
Stockholm	1	-1	C
Tunis	19	10	F
Vienna	0	-4	Sn

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	17	9	Sh
Amsterdam	1	-2	C
Athens	17	13	F
Berlin	-1	-3	F
Bonn	1	-4	F
Brussels	-1	-4	F
Copenhagen	1	-3	F
Crete	16	14	S
Geneva	3	-1	C
Larnaca	21	10	F
London	6	3	C
Madrid	9	2	F
Milan	4	3	Sn
Nice	14	7	F
Oslo	0	0	F
Paris	1	-2	C
Rome	13	8	Sh
Stockholm	1	-1	C
Tunis	21	10	F
Vienna	2	-1	C

Friday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	17	7	Sh
Amsterdam	4	-1	C
Athens	18	14	Sh
Berlin	-1	-3	Sn
Bonn	1	-3	Sn
Brussels	2	-1	F
Copenhagen	2	-4	Sn
Crete	21	16	Sh
Geneva	4	-1	C
Larnaca	21	11	F
London	8	2	C
Madrid	10	3	F
Milan	8	2	Sh
Nice	14	6	S
Oslo	2	-4	Sn
Paris	2	0	C
Rome	14	6	Th
Stockholm	1	-7	Sn
Tunis	19	10	Th
Vienna	1	-2	Sn

Saturday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	19	7	Sh
Amsterdam	4	0	Si
Athens	15	12	Sh
Berlin	-2	-5	Sn
Bonn	-1	-3	Sn
Brussels	2	-1	F
Copenhagen	1	-5	F
Crete	22	13	S
Geneva	5	0	C
Larnaca	22	13	Sh
London	8	2	C
Madrid	9	3	F
Milan	10	2	F
Nice	14	6	F
Oslo	-1	-7	S
Paris	4	0	C
Rome	15	8	F
Stockholm	-4	-11	Sn
Tunis	18	10	F
Vienna	1	-3	Sn

C, cloudy; Dr, drizzle; F, fair; Fg, fog; H, hail; R, rain; Sl, sleet; Sn, snow; S, sunny; Th, thunder. * (previous day)

Around the world

Yesterday's lunchtime reports

		max	min
Alacolo	C	19	55
Algiers	C	18	64
Alicante	S	18	64
Amsterdam	R	4	39
Athens	R	12	54
Auckland	C	19	66
B Aires	S	29	84
Bahrain	F	28	82
Bangkok	C	32	90
Barcelona	F	14	57
Beijing	S	2	36
Belgrade	C	4	39
Berlin	C	1	34
Bermuda	S	22	72
Biarritz	Sh	7	45
Bombay	S	31	88
Bordeaux	F	10	50
Boston	C	8	46
Brussels	C	3	41
Budapest	Sn	1	34
Cairo	S	21	70
Calcutta	S	28	82
Cape Town	F	22	73
Casablanca	F	19	66
Chicago	C	10	64
Copthagen	M	3	37
Corfu	C	16	61
Dallas	C	22	73
Dhaka	F	29	84
Dublin	C	7	45
Faro	S	18	64
Florence	S	11	52
Frankfurt	C	3	37
Funchal	S	21	70
Geneva	C	3	37
Gibraltar	S	17	63
Helsinki	C	0	32
Hong Kong	C	23	73
Innsbruck	F	0	32
Istanbul	C	10	50
Jo'burg	F	22	72
K Lumpur	C	31	88
Kingston	F	30	86
Larnaca	C	23	73
Lima	C	21	70
Lisbon	S	15	59
London	S	7	45
L. Angeles	C	17	63
Las Palmas	Sn	0	32
Madrid	F	11	52
Majorca	R	10	50
Malaga	F	17	63
Malta	C	16	61
Melbourne	C	16	59
Mexico City	S	21	70
Miami	C	28	79
Milan	C	3	37
Montreal	C	4	39
Moscow	S	-15	5
Munich	C	0	32
Nairobi	C	24	75
Naples	S	16	61
New Delhi	S	23	73
N. Orleans	C	23	73
New York	C	12	54
Nice	C	13	55
Oporto	C	14	57
Oslo	C	5	41
Paris	C	7	45
Perth	S	26	79
Prague	Fg	-2	28
Reykjavik	C	-1	30
Rhodes	C	17	63
Rio de Jan.	C	29	84
Rome	F	11	52
Sarajevo	C	2	36
Singapore	F	30	86
Stockholm	M	1	34
Strasbourg	Sn	1	34
Sydney	F	19	66
Tel Aviv	S	27	81
Tenerife	S	24	75
Tokyo	F	11	52
Toronto	M	7	45
Tunis	F	16	59
Vancouver	R	6	41
Venice	S	9	48
Vienna	M	0	32
Warsaw	M	-1	30
Washington	F	17	63
Wellington	C	16	64
Zurich	Sn	0	32

European weather outlook

Scandinavia

Norway and Sweden will be relatively mild, but cloudy and windy with some rain or sleet in the north and west. Finland will be rather cloudy and blustery, but here it will be cold enough for snow flurries. Meanwhile, Denmark will be fine and settled but very cold and frosty. Maximum temperatures ranging from 9C along the west coast of Norway, to minus 1C in parts of Denmark.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland

A strong ridge of high pressure will dominate all areas, bringing a good deal of dry, settled weather. However, it will be very cold with persistent frost and patchy mist in many places, and a few light snow flurries are likely in Austria. Maximum temperature 0 to -4C.

France

Mostly dry and settled, but remaining cold with frost lasting all day in many places. There will be a lot of cloud in the east with isolated snow flurries, but the west should be brighter. Maximum temperatures mostly near zero, but up to 14C on the Riviera.

Spain and Portugal

Central and northern regions will be distinctly chilly but mostly dry and bright. The south will be more unsettled with heavy showers. Maximum temperatures 12-15C along the Mediterranean coast, but colder inland.

Italy

Cold and cloudy in the north with sleet and snow over the mountains. Central and southern areas will be milder but unsettled with sunny spells and heavy showers. Maximum temperatures ranging from 3C in the far north to 16C in the south.

Greece

Mostly dry and bright on Crete, but showery elsewhere. Maximum temperatures 14-18C.

Television and radio

BBC 1

7.00am Bintang Breakfast. 8.00 BBC Breakfast News. 10.00 Xtray. 10.30 Sixth Challenge. 11.00 City Hospital. 11.27 News; Regional News and Weather. 12.00 Good Living With Jane Asher. 12.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook. 12.55 News; Regional News and Weather. 1.00 Pass the Buck. 1.25 Going for a Song. 1.50 The Weather Show. 2.00 News. 2.05 Regional News and Weather. 2.40 Neighbours. 3.05 Ironside. 3.55 Wipeout. 4.25 Children's BBC: Pingwings. 4.40 Dangermouse. 4.50 Chucklevision. 5.10 Get Your Own Back. 5.35 The Queen's Nose. 6.00 Newsround. 6.10 Blue Peter. 6.35 Neighbours. 7.00 News. 7.30 Regional News Magazine. 8.00 A Question of Sport. 8.30 Tomorrow's World. 9.00 The Life of Birds. 9.50 The National Lottery: Amazing Luck Stories. 10.00 News. 10.25 National Lottery Update. 10.30 Where Were You? Pride, Passion and Penalties. 11.20 War and Pete. 11.50 The Richard Dimbleby Lecture. 12.35 FILM: Mean Machine. 2.20 Weather. 2.25 BBC News 24.

BBC 2

7.10am A New Way of Life. 8.00 Children's BBC: King Greetingers. 8.05 Teletubbies. 8.30 Tom and Jerry Kids. 8.55 To Me, To You. 9.20 Robinson Sooze. 9.40 Jungle Jungle. 9.50 King Greetingers. 10.00 Daytime on Two: Space Ark. 10.10 What? Where? When? Why? 10.35 Who – Me? 10.45 Words and Pictures. 11.00 Children's BBC: Teletubbies. 11.30 Daytime on Two: Numbertime. 11.45 Watch. 12.00 Around Scotland. 12.30 The Geography Programme. 12.45 Science in Action. 1.00 Teaching Today. 1.30 Working Lunch. 2.00 Children's BBC: Jungle Jungle. 2.10 The Arts and Crafts Hour. 2.10 Match of the Day Goals. 2.40 News; Regional News and Weather. 2.45 Westminster with Diane Hoskin. 4.05 News; Regional News and Weather. 5.00 Change That. 5.25 Ready, Steady, Cook. 5.55 Esther. 6.50 Cricket: The Ashes. 7.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. 7.45 Sliders. 8.35 Behind Closed Doors. 9.00 Looking Good. 9.30 Home Front. 10.00 Nurse. 10.50 Naked. 11.55 Vote Nation Starts. 11.50 Newsnight. 12.15 Brothers and Sisters. 12.55 Weather. 1.00 Dispatch Box. 1.05 Learning Zone. 5.45 Open University.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

7.00am World News. 7.25 World Weather. 7.30 Melvin and Maureen. 7.45 Blue Peter. 8.10 Seesaw. 8.35 Hot Chefs. 8.45 Ready, Steady, Cook. 9.15 Style Challenge. 9.40 Change That. 10.05 Xtray. 10.45 EastEnders. 11.15 TOTP2. 12.00 Delia Smith's Christmas. 12.30 Ready, Steady, Cook. 1.00 Can't Cook, Won't Cook. 1.25 Change That. 1.50 World Weather. 2.00 Melvin and Maureen. 2.30 Style Challenge. 2.55 Xtray. 3.40 Style Challenge. 4.05 World Weather. 4.10 Hot Chefs. 4.35 Melvin and Maureen. 4.55 Blue Peter. 5.20 Seesaw. 5.45 Nature By Design. 6.00 World News. 6.25 World Weather. 6.30 Ready, Steady, Cook. 7.00 EastEnders. 7.30 Home Front in the Garden. 8.00 The Goodies. 8.30 Dad. 9.00 Mr Wakefield's Crusade. 9.30 Meetings with Remarkable Trees. 10.00 World News and Business Report. 10.25 World Weather. 10.30 Changing Rooms. 11.00 Jobs for the Girls. 11.40 The Sky at Night. 12.10 Spender. 12.55 World Weather. 1.00 The Great Picture Chase.

BBC World

● Intelsat

7.00am World News and Weather. 7.30 World Living: Holiday. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Focus: Reporters. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Hardtalk. 11.00 World News and Weather. 11.30 World Living: Future Fantastic. 11.55 World City Guides. 12.00 The World Today. 12.55 World City Guides. 1.00 The World Today. 1.30 World Focus: Reporters. 2.00 World News. 2.15 World Business Report and Weather. 2.30 The World Today. 3.30 World Living: The Net. 3.55 World City Guides. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.30 Hard Talk. 5.00 World News and Weather. 5.30 World Focus: Reporters. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 World Living: Holiday. 6.55 World City Guides. 7.00 The World Today. 8.00 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Focus: The Money Programme. 9.55 World City Guides. 10.00 World News. 10.10 World Business Report and Weather. 10.30 World Living: Top Gear. 11.00 World News. 11.10 Europe Direct. 11.55 World City Guides. 12.00 World News and Weather. 12.30 World Business Report. 12.45 Asia Today and Weather. 12.55 World City Guides. 1.00 World News and Weather. 1.30 World Living: Holiday. 2.00 News and Weather. 2.30 Asia Today. 4.45 World Business Report. 5.00 News and Weather. 5.30 USA Direct. 6.00 News and Weather. 6.30 Asia Today. 6.45 World Business Report. 8.00 News and Weather. 8.30 USA Direct. 9.00 News and Weather. 9.30 World Focus: The Money Programme. 9.55 World City Guides.

Radio 4

92.4-94.9 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am Today. 9.30 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament. 10.00 Midweek. 10.45 (FM) Bunny's Boys. 10.45 (LW) Daily Service. 11.00 Woman's Hour. 12.00 Mankunt. 12.30 Fanny Bones. 1.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast. 1.00 News. 1.04 You and Yours. 2.00 The World at One. 2.30 Wildbrain. 3.00 The Archers. 3.15 The Golden Triangle. 4.00 Berdeens' Question Time. 4.30 Songlines. 4.45 Gregory's Legs. 5.00 Case Notes. 5.30 Thinking Allowed. 6.00 PM. 6.54 Shipping Forecast. 7.00 News. 7.20 Sociael. 8.00 The Archers. 8.15 Front Row. 8.45 Still Waters. 9.00 A Life Worth Living. 9.45 Better Than Sex. 10.00 Costing the Earth. 10.30 Midweek. 11.00 The World Tonight. 11.45 Book at Bedtime: Another World. 12.00 Late Night on 4: Children's Hour with Armstrong and Miller. 12.30 (LW) Today in Parliament. 12.50 (FM) Radio Shuttleworth. 1.00 News. 1.50 The Long Book: A Man to Fall. 1.55 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service. 5.20 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 Farming Today.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

7.30am Sports International. 8.00 News. 8.15 Off the Shelf: One of Ours. 8.30 Meridian Live. 9.00 News. 9.10 Pause for Thought. 9.15 Weekday. 9.30 Dreyerooman. 10.00 News: (S48 only) News in German. 10.05 World Business Report. 10.15 The Farming World. 10.30 British Now. 10.45 Sports Round-Up. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 One Planet. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Sports International. 1.00 News. 1.05 World Business Report. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.60 Seeing Stars. 1.45 Sports Round-Up. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 News. 3.05 Outlook. 3.30 Magazine. 4.00 News; (S48 only) News in German. 4.05 Sports Round-Up. 4.15 Performance. 4.30 Everywoman. 5.00 News. 5.15 From Our Own Correspondent. 5.30 Insight; (S48 only) News in German. 5.45 Britain Today. 6.00 Europe Today. 6.30 World Business. 6.45 Sports Round-Up. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 The Worlds; (S48 only) News in German. 8.00 News Summary. 8.01 Outlook. 8.55 Pause For Thought. 9.00 Multitrack X-Press. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 On Screen. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Insight. 11.45 Sports Round-Up. 12.00 News. 12.05 Outlook. 12.30 Multitrack X-Press. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.60 From Our Own Correspondent. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Omnibus. 5.00 Newsday. 5.30 Maddies Books. 6.00 News. 6.05 World Business Report. 6.15 Sports Round-Up. 6.30 Sain of Britain. 8.00 The World Today. 8.00 The World Today.

Sky Premier

● Astra

7.00 Mystery Science Theater 3000: The Movie. 8.30 The Karate Kid II. 11.00 Stormchaser; Revenge of the Twister. 1.00 Mystery Science Theater 3000: The Movie. 2.30 Jeeves & Wooster: Fed Up. 4.30 The Elf Who Didn't Believe. 6.30 Stormchaser: Revenge of the Twister. 8.30 Barry Norman's Film Night. 9.00 To Gillian on her 37th Birthday. 11.00 Glo. 1.00 Fargo. 3.40 The Pirez Family. 4.35 Some Mother's Son.

Sky MovieMax

● Astra

7.00 Coyote Summer. 8.45 White Dwarf. 10.15 Address Unknown. 12.00 Ehrich, Horror of the Deep. 2.00 White Dwarf. 4.00 Address Unknown. 6.00 Rage Against the Harvest. 8.00 Coyote Summer. 9.50 White Squall. 12.00 Banished Behind Bars. 1.55 Cupid. 3.30 Big Trouble in Little China. 4.50 For Queen and Country.

Sky Cinema

● Astra

7.00 Hotel Reserve. 7.00 I'll Be Seeing You. 9.00 The Big Red One. 11.00 Brubaker. 1.00 Town on Trial. 2.50 Suspicion. 3.30 The Great Dictator.

Sky Sports

● Astra

6.00 Sports Centre. 6.15 WWF Wrestling: Live Wire. 8.15 Sports Centre. 9.30 Rading News. 10.00 Aerobics Style. 10.30 The Footballers' Football Show. 11.30 Inside Scottish Football. 12.30 Fastrax. 1.00 Aerobics Oz Style. 1.30 Football: Workington 2nd Fifth Round. 3.45 Sports Centre. 4.00 Inside Scottish Football. 5.00 The Footballers' Football Show. 6.00 WWF Wrestling: Shotgun. 7.00 Sports Centre. 7.30 Unbelievable Sports. 8.00 Pool: World Masters. 9.00 Boxing: Ringside. 10.30 Unbelievable Sports. 11.00 Sports Centre. 11.15 Pool: World Masters. 12.15 Boxing: Ringside. 1.45 Sports Centre. 2.00 Golf: Australian Open – Live. 7.00 Close.

Sky Sports 3

● Astra

1.00 WWF: Shotgun. 2.00 Fish TV. 3.00 Boxing. 4.00 Olympic Series. 4.30 Fastrax. 5.00 Motorcycling: Grand Prix Review. 6.00 Fish TV. 8.30 Cricket: Australia v England. 11.00 Olympics. 11.50 Sky Sports Classics-Gold: Rugby League. 12.50 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Intelsat

8.30 Football: Eurogoals. 10.00 Football: Real Madrid v Vasco Da Gama. 12.00 Football: World Cup Legends. 1.00 Tennis: ATP Tour Review. 1.90 Sailing: World Cup. 2.00 Showjumping: Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art. 3.00 Luge: World Cup. 4.00 Football: Real Madrid v Vasco Da Gama. 6.00 Motorsport: Speedworld Magazine. 7.00 Extreme Sports. 8.00 Fun Sports. 8.30 Ten-Pin Bowling. 10.00 Fitness: Mike Fitness Europe. 11.00 Boxing: WBU Light Welterweight Title. 12.00 Motorsport: Speedworld Magazine. 1.00 Motorsport: Network Q Rally. 1.30 Close.

Sky 1

● Astra

5.00 The Simpsons. 8.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show. 9.30 Hollywood Squares. 10.00 Guilty! 11.00 Sally Jessy Raphael. 12.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show. 1.00 Jenny Jones. 2.00 Special K Collection. 3.00 Days of Our Lives. 3.30 Special K Collection. 4.00 Sally Jessy Raphael. 5.00 Special K Collection. 6.00 Jenny Jones. 6.30 Special K Collection. 8.00 Guilty! 8.30 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 7.30 Married... With Children. 7.30 Friends. 8.00 The Simpsons. 8.30 Real TV. 9.00 Stargate SG-1. 10.00 The X Files. 11.00 Millennium. 12.00 Friends. 12.30 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 1.30 Renegade. 2.30 Long Play.

National Geographic

● Astra

8.00 Bears Under Siege. 9.00 Search for the Battleship Bismarck. 10.00 Passionate People: Wildlife Filmmakers. 11.00 Realm of the Alligator. 12.00 Africa's Big Five. 1.00 Ozone: Cancer of the Sky. 2.00 Close.

UK Gold

● Astra

8.00 Crossroads. 8.30 Neighbours. 8.55 EastEnders. 9.30 The Bill. 10.00 The Bill. 10.30 The House of Eliott. 11.30 Angels. 12.00 Dallas. 12.55 Neighbours. 1.55 EastEnders. 2.00 Juliet Bravo. 3.00 Dallas. 3.55 The Bill. 4.25 The Bill. 4.55 EastEnders. 5.30 Angels. 6.00 All Creatures Great and Small. 7.00 Due South. 8.00 May to December. 8.30 Ain't Half Hot, Mum. 9.30 Dad's Army. 10.00 One Foot in the Grave. 10.40 Hamlet Macbeth. 11.45 French and Saunders. 12.15 The Bill. 12.50 The Bill. 1.20 The Chief. 2.15 Dangerfield. 2.50 Only When I Laugh. 3.40 Shopping.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

5.00 Rex Hunt's Fishing World. 5.30 Walker's World. 6.00 Flight Deck. 6.30 Ancient Warriors. 7.00 Animal Doctor. 7.30 Natural Born Winners. 8.30 Beyond 2000. 9.00 How Did They Build That? 9.30 Animal X. 10.00 The Unexplained. 11.00 Nightfighters. 12.00 Real Lives: Shops and Robbers. 1.00 Survival. 2.00 Flight Deck. 2.30 Ancient Warriors. 3.00 Close.

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Islington is the chic home of Britain's left leaning, affluent élite. So how did its schools get like this?

Islington, home of the rich and influential, has some of the most desperate schools in the country. **Catherine Bennett** on a local crisis that tells the story of a national problem

What becomes of the middle classes?



The Grey Coat Hospital, in Westminster, is an ancient school with many more applicants than places. The percentage of girls getting five or more GCSEs at grades A to C, is 69 — compared with a national average of 46.3 per cent. Last year 550 girls applied for 150 places. Selection took place after an "assessment" day and interview. One of Chris Patten's daughters went there. Harriet Harman's still does.

Understandably, parents from all over London consider that a free education in this place is worth a substantial detour. Rupert Perry, for example, sends his two daughters from Islington, several miles to the north. From an educational point of view, their journey is clearly worthwhile: Islington's GCSE score is some 20 per cent below the national average; a good 40 per cent below Grey Coat's. From a political perspective, however, the girls' education is rather less positive. Their father, Rupert Perry, is a Labour councillor and former mayor of Islington. Last June, he took over as the borough's chair of education. One of his tasks is to persuade Islington's middle-class parents to try the authority's schools.

Currently, many such parents would no more countenance such a future for their babies than they would leave them unattended in a bath, or feed them British beef. The borough may be synonymous with *bien pensant*, New Labour-approved affluence, abrim with parents who believe that élitist grammar schools should be shown no mercy — yet its own comprehensives remain among the worst in the country. In the new league tables they come third from the bottom. The reason for this failure? The refusal of all these principled, middle-class parents to support their local comprehensives.

As Perry complains: "The wealthier parents probably won't even see a state school. And then because they don't see a state school, they'll make assumptions that they must be universally dreadful, or whatever." But these "wealthier parents" are not the only ones avoiding Islington's schools: 40 per cent of parents educate their children in state schools outside the borough. The richer ones are stuffed into people carriers and shuttled through the traffic to private schools in Hampstead or Highgate. Less affluent or cannier parents bag places in Camden's neighbouring but far more successful schools; others, such as Perry, seek out selective schools with vast catchment areas; some are subject to sudden religious conversions; poorer parents put their children on the Tube to Potter's Bar; others simply give up, and move to Crouch End.

To a lesser extent, of course, this kind of exodus happens in cities all over England. Many education authorities confront the same problem: how can the middle classes be persuaded to support their local schools? This is why a look at Islington is instructive.

If parents in this borough refuse to countenance a state secondary education for their children, then, really, who will? For the odd thing about this flight is that many of those responsible have sent their children to local primaries, and would genuinely prefer their children to continue at a local secondary. Partly because these schools are close by, and don't cost £1,600 a term, but also because a remarkable number of the "wealthy" people in Islington truly believe themselves to be socialists.

It is thanks to their principles that Perry and his colleagues are still — just — in power, presiding over Islington's garbage-strewn streets, exacting the highest council taxes in London for some of the worst services. At every general election, red posters speckle Georgian terraces, disfigure the windows of houses like the Blairs' old place, which sold for around £700,000.

Unlike the residents of Kensington, say, or Wandsworth, Islington's chatterers are famously shame-faced and defensive about their desertion, they mutter that they have been driven to it, that their children's future must not be sacrificed to parental principle. Or, like the Blairs, they smilingly regret the incompatibility of their religious beliefs and an education alongside Islington's poor, and arrange an interview at the Oratory.

"I would never accuse anybody of any political party of being hypocritical as far as the way they want to bring up their children," Perry says, carefully. "Because everybody's got their different views about what they want, and usually, it's wanting to do what they perceive to be best for their children."

So does his own feeling that Grey Coats will do best for his girls send out an encouraging message to other Islington parents? Perry explains that religious needs — his family are Church of England worshippers — took him to Grey Coats, then adds, rather confusingly, that his son attends an Islington secondary, the Catholic St Aloysius' College. (Islington also has a Catholic girls' school.) St Aloysius is one of only two schools in the borough to use interviews and assessment tests to guarantee a "balanced" intake. Their rejects, of course, ensure that other Islington schools remain as imbalanced as ever. "Funnily enough," Perry says, "I'm the first chair of education to send any child into any Islington secondary school." His predecessors have favoured Acland Burghley, a Camden school which is much in demand among Islington's educational refugees.

Perry again mentions his son's school — though not his daughters' — at a meeting of the education committee in Islington Town Hall. The committee discusses a collection of strikingly favourable Ofsted reports, noting the fine leadership and good value for money offered by several local schools. If only, the councillors agree, this positive side to Islington schools could be publicised, then the middle classes might wooed back. "We've got to stop talking them down," says a headmaster.

Then they come to the the borough's GCSE results. Alas, these are not, it must be said, likely to tempt back the anxious bourgeousie. Across the borough's nine secondary schools, the percentage of five GSCE A to C grades has dropped from 25.4 in 1997, to 23.3 per cent. Yet again, Islington will scrape the bottom of the national tables. At George Orwell school, the borough's worst, the GCSE average was 10 per cent.

Chris Pryce, a liberal democrat councillor, declares that "children are being appallingly let down". He points out that he should know — his daughter goes to Islington Green, one of the borough's three failing secondaries. Talking them up will do nothing to improve matters, he protests. "We can start by recognising the truth about our schools."

At Highbury Grove, the GCSE score was 15.23, down from 16.6. It sounds disgraceful — until you visit

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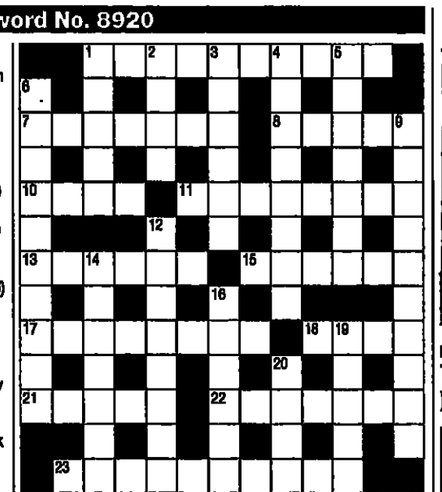
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Quick Crossword No. 8920



Across
1 Didn't know when to stop (4,3,3)
7 High spirits (7)
8 Number — finger or toe (5)
10 Bean used as meat substitute (4)
11 Natives of the Austrian capital (6)
13 Cause (6)
15 In music, quickly — poster (anag) (6)
17 False impression (8)
18 Set of playing cards (4)
21 Large bird of prey (5)
22 Secret — soldier of the lowest rank (7)
23 Conform (3,3,4)

Down
1 Tired (5)
2 Ingenuous (4)
3 Game with ball and racquets (6)
4 In no way special (6)
5 Ancient port on the Mediterranean (7)
6 Set of china or pottery (3,7)
9 Chief mountain system of North America (3,7)
12 Loudest (8)
14 In music, fast — or *legal (anag)* (7)
16 Hairpiece (6)
19 Astound (5)
20 Sound equipment (2-2)

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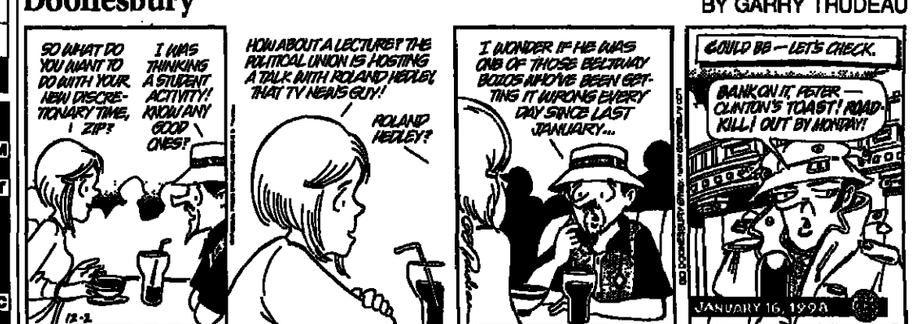
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

A National Role for you in Healthcare

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The Secretary of State for Health intends to appoint a number of individuals as non-executive Chairs or members of Special Health Authorities. These authorities are national bodies and each has a particular and specialist role. Some directly support services to patients, others provide vital support to the administration of the NHS and its staff. These are senior positions of leadership in complex organisations and are demanding in terms of intellectual ability and personal skills. Some of the posts will require particular professional expertise but all of them require people committed to the NHS with good judgement, analytical skills, sensitivity and a strong team working approach. During 1999 we anticipate vacancies in the bodies listed below. Unless otherwise stated, Chairs are remunerated in the range £15,000 to £20,000 pa for at least 12 days a month and members £5,000 pa for at least three days a month.

Prescription Pricing Authority — **Based in Newcastle**
Responsible for the examination, checking and pricing of prescriptions for drugs and medicines. Will have three vacancies, one of whom must be a community pharmacist.

Medical Practices Committee — **Based in London**
Meets weekly. Attendance allowance of £166.90. Maintains an even distribution of GPs throughout England and Wales by controlling admissions to the Medical List of Health Authorities. Will have four vacancies, two of which are for medical professionals.

NHS Supplies Authority — **Based in Reading**
Enables the NHS to obtain the maximum value from the money it spends on goods and services. Will have two vacancies for lay members.

Ashworth, Rampton and Broadmoor Special Health Authorities — **Based in Liverpool, Retford and Reading**
Provide psychiatric services for patients in England and Wales who require treatment under conditions of high security. Ashworth, Rampton and Broadmoor will each have vacancies for a Chair and non-executives.

The Health Education Authority — **Based in London**
Provides a national centre of information and advice on health education; publishing material and carrying out campaigns. Will have nine vacancies for people with an interest and relevant experience in health, medicine, local authorities, education or the voluntary sector.

The NHS Litigation Authority — **Based in London**
Assists the NHS in funding and managing clinical negligence litigation. Will have a vacancy for a Chair and one non-executive member. Candidates will ideally have relevant specialist knowledge in the field of insurance, finance or personal injury litigation, healthcare or clinical risk management.

Dental Vocational Training Authority — **Based in Eastbourne**
Meets three times a year. Allowance of £109.50 a day. Adjudicates applications for training from dentists wishing to join Health Authority dental lists in England and Wales. Will have up to 20 vacancies for members who need to be registered dentists.

Mental Health Act Commission — **Based in Nottingham**
The Commissioners work throughout England and Wales to protect the interests of patients detained under the Mental Health Act. Will have a vacancy for a Chair. Candidates should have a thorough appreciation of the Commission's role and substantial experience at a very senior level.

Dental Practice Board — **Based in Eastbourne**
Approves payments for dentists. Will have vacancies for the Chair and five board members. The Chair, who must be a dentist, normally spends two days a week at the Board for which £17,145 pa is payable. Board members spend 10 days a year at the Board for which £160 per day is paid. Three of the Board members must be dentists, the other two must have strong IT, financial, personnel or management skills.

NHS Information Authority — **A new authority, likely to be based in Birmingham**
Will be responsible for developing national products and standards to support local implementation of the new NHS Information Strategy *(Information for Health)* and ensuring the NHS has effective information technology to improve services to patients. Seeks a Chair with understanding of how information management and technology can support core business and ideally with experience of using project based approaches to the delivery of results. Will also require non-executive members.

In addition to these posts there are a number of unpaid posts on the special advisory committees listed below.

Scientific Committee on Tobacco & Health
Provides advice to government on relevant scientific matters such as research priorities on tobacco and health, behavioural aspects, tobacco constituents, monitoring results and new tobacco products. Meets four times a year. Requires a Chair with an in-depth scientific knowledge of the field and professional stature. Also requires a member who is a medical consultant with expertise in paediatric or respiratory medicine.

Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment
Three meetings a year. Allowance of £84 per meeting. Provides expert advice to the Government through the Chief Medical Officer. Seeks a lay member with a scientific background to work alongside experts on the Committee.

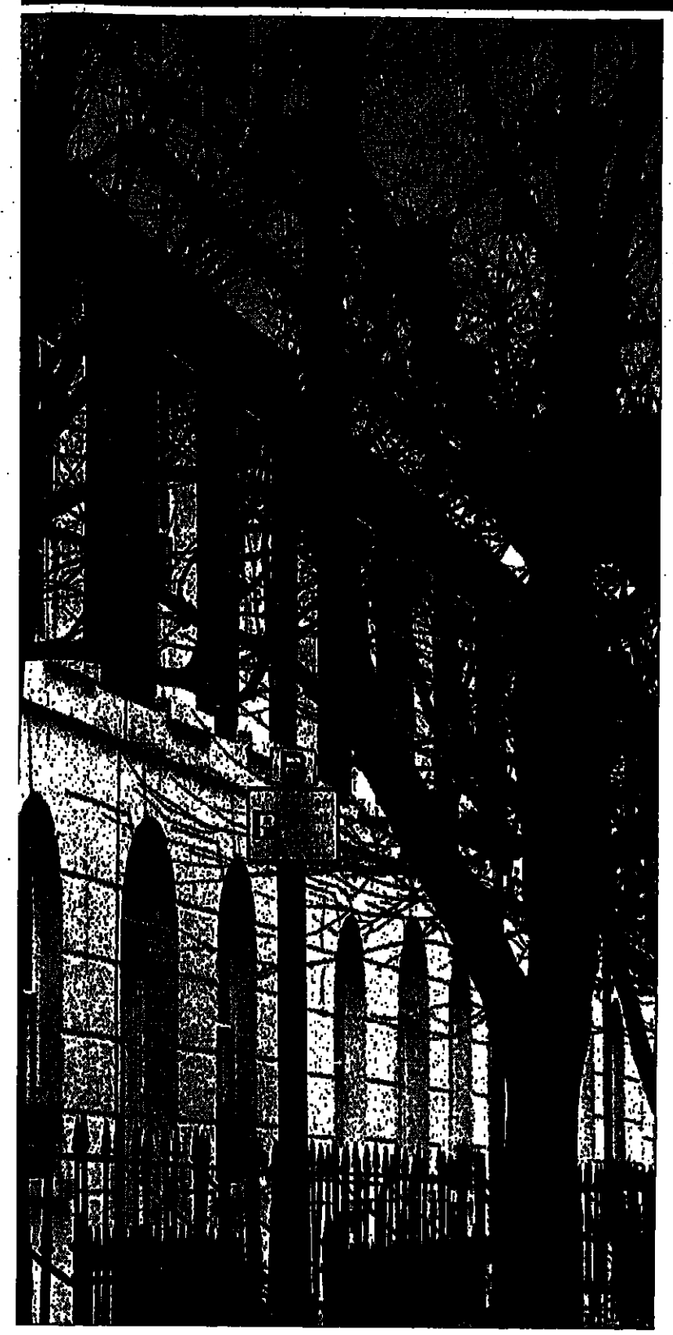
Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment
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If you want to serve the NHS in any of these ways please call 0113 254 6452 during office hours Monday to Friday stating which posts you are interested in and we will send you an information pack. The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 8 January 1999.

The Department of Health welcomes applications regardless of gender, race, disability or sexuality. A guaranteed interview scheme is available for disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for appointment.

The Department of Health is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. Political activity will not be a criterion for appointment but candidates must subscribe to the objectives of the body in which they are interested.

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE



Highbury Grove. The school suffers from punishing disadvantages — not least that its interior, an incoherent jumble of corners and corridors, seems to have been assembled by a specialist in public toilets. The latest Ofsted report, taking into account the school's history and composition, described it as "an improving school which has made significant strides since its last inspection. It is benefiting from outstanding, determined leadership . . ." The headmistress, Vivien Cutler, arrived four years ago. "I don't want us to be seen as a deficit model," she says, sharply. "The results reflect our intake."

Last year, for example, a quarter of that intake had a reading age of seven, or under. More than 50 per cent of the pupils have English as a second language; 40 different languages are spoken. Some would insist that such figures simply excuse incompetence: the school is "blaming the intake". Cutler produces a list of recent new boys, including a 15-year-old, arrived from Nigeria, barely literate in his first language, Yoruba; a Kurdish-Arabic speaker from Kuwait, aged 15, who has never had any education; and two ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo, who speak no English.

Sign of the times . . . but where do middle-class kids go to school?
PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER TOOTH

"I don't mind league tables," Cutler says, "so long as there's some indication of where you're starting from." She, and many of her colleagues, prefer to talk about "value added" results, which take into account pupils' abilities when they arrived, as well as where they finished. "If you start in year seven, with a quarter of your intake whose reading age is that of a key stage one pupil, then if you're getting 81 per cent of them through to some sort of GCSE pass two years later, you're not doing too bad a job."

On the other hand, as Highbury Grove's more ambitious pupils recognise, a G grade is hardly worth having. "If they get like a D and an E," says one boy, one of the school's abler pupils, "that's it, they're going to have to be dustbinmen or something." Besides, other boroughs, starting with similarly disadvantaged children, score higher, don't they? Cutler, who was formerly a head in Tower Hamlets, argues that other disadvantaged boroughs may benefit from a stable, more homogeneous population, say, of Bengalis. Fine — but what about Camden, next door to Islington, which has somehow created, from similarly deprived and mobile raw material, a few schools that parents will move house to get into? Why couldn't Islington do the same?

This is where the explanations start to vary. Some blame Ilea, the old Inner London Education Authority, for the lamentable state and curious composition of the schools it bequeathed to Islington, in 1990. Seven out of nine were single sex, several were enormous. Some accuse Margaret Hodge, who was leader of the council at the time, of introducing a culture of "naming and shaming" which led to a loss of parental confidence. Others simply remember that her children went to school in Camden.

Perry, in his amiable way, attributes past inadequacies to inexperience. "I think the ethos has changed over the years," he says, comfortably. "Islington has only been running education now for eight years, a relatively short time . . ."

Eight years of the wrong ethos is long enough, however, to blight the chances of thousands of children and scare off generations of parents. As long ago as 1991, Islington's chair of education commissioned a survey asking parents why they were looking at schools outside the borough. The results would probably be similar today. Parents said they wanted high quality education, "particularly for the academically high fliers". They wanted better discipline, a culture of learning, and more mixed schools. There was a demand for classics. They felt that the schools were "too political", a charge still levelled by Islington's Liberal Democrat leader, Steve Hitchins, who attributes much of the damage to a "virulent SWP cell" in the local branch of the NUT, which has resisted all interference, including the imposition of SATs and the national curriculum.

An active NUT member laughs off the charge of extremism. He concedes, however, that some of his members will strenuously oppose any attempts at streaming — or setting as it's now called — believing that it "puts limits on what children can achieve". At a different school, another experienced teacher says the lingering obsession with mixed ability teaching came from the borough, not the classrooms. "You had rhetoric, and forcing doctrines on schools — mixed ability, mixed ability, mixed ability — it hasn't worked, it never did work, and we all pretended it worked, and if you didn't toe the line, you were seen as somebody who was just making trouble. It does work — under certain conditions — but if you've got extremes of ability, how on earth can you teach an A star pupil, in the same class as somebody who can hardly read and write? But that doctrine was forced down our throats."

How many of the schools are setting now? No one seems quite sure. "Nearly all," Perry thinks. In every year, in every subject? "I don't know, to be honest," says Andy Roberts, who started as the borough's new chief education officer at the start of the last school term. Before long, one suspects, setting will be universal in Islington schools. Setting appeals to parents.

Roberts, a former teacher, intends to restore — or create — parental confidence. His strategy for doing so is basic enough — though revolutionary in a borough which seems not to have had any strategies at all in the past. After looking closely at the state of all the schools, he plans to provide practical, "highly interventionist support in classrooms and in staffrooms and with governing bodies — that's when you start to see change". His development plan will be ready for public consultation any day now. "I'm going to put in place something that will be at least a three and maybe a five-year strategy. We won't turn Islington schools round overnight, but I'm hoping that between now and three years, we'll change the culture of education of Islington, and maybe in five years, we'll have shifted the culture totally." Maybe, eventually, he will. After two years in his last job, in Hartlepool, the percentage improvement at key stage two was the highest in the country.

To achieve a similarly dramatic result in Islington, Roberts needs more able pupils in his secondary schools. At Highbury Grove, Cutler and her staff have introduced setting, and evening revision classes, and want to persuade parents that non-needy pupils will now receive as much attention as needy ones. "If you have an able boy in this school, I personally guarantee that if he puts the effort in, he will be up there, with the highest grades", says Abdulla Ahmed, Highbury Grove's head of science, who sends his 14-year-old son to the school. "We feel that group deserves as much support as the least able."

At least these efforts — including extra classes in the evening, and at weekends — seem to be appreciated. "If you're falling behind, a teacher will make time for you, to help you," says Hamit Dayah, in his GCSE year. "They'll say: 'Come and see me at lunchtime', after school, and give you extra help." With some pride, Abdalla Ahmed shows off detailed charts of boys and their grades: by targeting different levels of ability, he has raised the school's GCSE science A to C rate to 30 per cent. "We *drag* them up," he says. "They are difficult — some of these Ds and Es, somebody outside might look at them, and say why are you wasting your time on that boy? But I'm not prepared to do that. Over time, these boys who are quite violent outside, you can pull them round."

Keen, now? The trouble with value added explanations, is that as much as they reveal levels of achievement and dedication that the raw league tables will never show — they may, in their own way, be just as much of a deterrent to the exigent middle classes. Do they want their children to go to a school where one in four has a reading age of seven or under — no matter how outstanding the leadership? "I don't know what they're seeking to do for their children," says Cutler. "What the hell is the point of educating the leaders of the future if they have no understanding of the vast majority of the population, or the issues that concern them? I find that quite frightening." But still not quite as frightening, I suspect, as many parents find Islington schools.

Pass notes

No 1312

Lord Bragg's hair



Age: Hard to say. It's hair today, gone tomorrow.

Appearance: Mutable.

Sorry? It changes a lot.

Ah . . . let's stick to the domestic, shall we? It isn't the South Bank Show. Too right: this is a subject of real significance.

It's only a hairdo? You obviously haven't seen Melvyn's hair recently. It's a creation. If it had been entered for the Turner Prize, it would have won by a mile.

What does it look like? "It's swirly at the sides like the princess in Star Wars, while at the front it has a long overhang worthy of Wilma in the Flintstones."

I see. Where is that from — Hairdresser's Journal? The Daily Telegraph actually. In a report of Melvyn's maiden speech in the Lords this week.

What was the speech about? Crimping scissors.

You're joking? Are you going away this Christmas?

You're running out of things to say: Isn't it warm for this time of the year?

You clearly don't have a clue what he was talking about. It was a scheme to help the army of media studies graduates get work actually, but the substance was submerged by the (hair)style.

Did it gel? Don't get cocky.

Well received? The odd "hair, hair".

What are you driving at? Lord Bragg's extraordinary hair has been an obsession for years. The Mail On Sunday once devoted a page to it; the Sunday Mirror said cuttingly that "some people have bad hair days, but Bragg is having a bad hair decade"; and a guest at last year's Booker Prize suggested that "Melvyn has done for hairdressing what Richard Rogers has done for the Festival Hall".

What does that mean? Nothing, but it sounded good after a bottle of Montrachet.

Not to be confused with: A possum on heat.

Do say: "Sound point, Melvyn, sorry, your Lordship. I think the Opportunity Channel is just what the country needs."

Don't say: "Lord Bragg is the Madame de Staël *de nos jours*. He should have his own salon."

Are you a Pass Master?
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Portrait

A 60-year-old Irishman with an odd hairdo and an army of golf-playing fans is trouncing the hip young DJs in the breakfast ratings war. **Charlotte Raven** salutes Terry Wogan

Top o' the morning



Terry's all gold . . . Wogan's brand of gentle banter has seen his dawn show outshine Zoë Ball and Chris Evans

My grandmother used to dream about Terry Wogan. She listened to him every morning in the seventies, liking his "way with words" and the fact that "he talked to you, not at you". He was both beguiling — a wit — and fundamentally unthreatening. "He was one of the cosy people that you'd like to have living with you," she said. "I think we were all in love with him a bit."

Twenty years later, her hero is still gaining new fans. With a weekly audience reach of 5.2 million, Wake Up To Wogan on Radio 2 is by far the most popular breakfast show. Which means that a 60-year-old Irishman with an "is he or isn't he" hairdo is trouncing "hip" young upstarts like Chris Evans and Zoë Ball. The Daily Mail and others have been quick to cast Wogan's audience figures as the triumph of age and experience over Puffa jackets, rap and youthful hubris. In this battle of sensibilities, Wogan stands for civilisation. And yet, as he proves every morning, he's more than just a man in a blazer who doesn't tell dirty jokes.

When Wogan returned to broadcasting in 1993, few of his former listeners remained. My grandmother, for example, having long ago defected to Eamonn Holmes, refused to be coaxed back to the wireless. Having been away from radio for nine years, Wogan must have known he'd have quite a job persuading a sceptical public that he wasn't a TV presenter.

One way of doing this might have been to redefine the programme for the nineties. He could have introduced a "wind-up" slot in which he would call, say, a curry house and pretend to be from health and safety. Or acquired a female sidekick. Instead, he just played a few records, chatted about this and that and made the usual jokes about his waistline.

Wogan comes on air every day at 7.30am. After two hours of merry joshing, he hands over to Ken Bruce — an archetypal Radio 2 DJ — and they indulge in a little banter. The form of words alters slightly, but the subject is predictable. "You're old," says Terry. "No, you're old," says Ken. It's this kind of thing that makes anyone under 98 want to run to the safety of the yoof DJs. They may have fake south London accents, but at least they don't do light entertainment.

On one level, Wake Up To Wogan is the sound of middle England at play. Imagine sitting down in a Home Counties pub on a Sunday afternoon. The bar is being propped up by a group of golf club coves who agree on every matter of importance. Like Wogan, they have noticed the woman on Ground Force's breasts, the unfair distribution of traffic cones and the fact advertising only exists in order to make you buy things. They believe, like him, that politicians are all the same, that pop songs don't make sense and that the world would be a better place if it wasn't run by petty bureaucrats.

Given all this, it seems amazing that increasing numbers of "young" people (in Radio 2 terms this means anyone under 55) are deserting other DJs for Wogan. A recent study showed that 350,000 new listeners in the 35-54 age group tuned in to the breakfast show last year. Few of these, I suspect, would describe themselves as Togs (Terry's Old Geezers and Gals who comprise his traditional audience), and they can't all spend their spare time playing golf.

It must therefore follow that a different kind of Wogan loyalist exists today who wouldn't have dreamed of listening when you only had four stations to choose from. Although it may seem paradoxical, the rise of commercial radio has benefited Radio 2. Once it sounded like the orthodoxy. Now, with youth-orientated programming the norm, it seems the radical choice.

So if Wogan hasn't changed, his context certainly has. People are coming round to him because, with no disrespect to his skills, the alternatives are much worse. One morning last week — as Wogan was making gentle sport with listeners who had responded to his request for a catch phrase ("I would speak but me gob's full" and "Do you expect a sweatshirt for that?" were typical suggestions) — the team on the Chris Evans show were talking about "whacking off" and getting drunk on moonshine jelly.

One morning, as Wogan was making gentle sport, Evans' team were talking about 'whacking off' and getting drunk on moonshine jelly

Increasingly, this is a culture where people talk at you, not to you. Broadcasters and TV presenters, from Clive Anderson to Zoë Ball, speak as if in an audition to a panel of judges upon whose responses their future success depends. They cannot imagine an audience, much less conceive a relationship with what is, to them, just a black space beyond the footlights.

The strength of the Wogan show lies in its host's unique ability to make us feel involved. Unlike most other DJs, he palpably likes his listeners. The programme is less a performance than a blow by blow account of an ongoing conversation. People write in with stories that make him laugh, he reads them out, makes a few jokes in response, then throws the whole thing open again.

This process is made possible by e-mail. For instance, a news item read out at six o'clock, about the successful tests on mice of a hair restoring treatment, will inspire a flurry of e-mail. Within an hour, these have been processed. "Being follicularly challenged," wrote Paul Gibbs, "I listened with interest to the news of a possible cure for baldness. Keen to try it out for myself, I have sellotaped seven mice to my head. Does your other listener think it's an improvement? Shall I comb the little black mouse or leave it spiky?"

It may not look so good on the page, but this made me laugh. One thing which really surprised me when I listened to WUTW was the quality of the listeners' interjections. At its peak, the show gets 900 e-mails a day. These are from "normal" people, as opposed to the green-ink brigade. "Someone who would send an e-mail would never write a letter to a disc jockey," Paul Walters, the producer, told me.

Asked what he thinks about Chris Evans, Walters revealed the shocking news that Evans and Wogan are occasional golfing buddies. Before I got too cross about this, I remembered that their bond as celebrities will always take precedence over any trivial artistic disputes. Evans absolutely idolises Wogan, apparently. He thinks he is king of the airwaves. "He would like to be him," said Walters. "But I don't think that would be possible, do you?"

In the first place, he said, Evans is over-mighty. His relationships with his colleagues do not allow for criticism, constructive or otherwise. "Chris Evans employs his producer but the producer should never work for the turn. It creates all sorts of problems."

Secondly, says Walters, there is only one Terry Wogan. "He's never hurtful. Whatever jokes he makes in the programme, it's never anything personal. I think that's so important."

So it is. But that alone cannot explain how Wogan could have gone on as long as he has without becoming a Tarby or a Brucie. Ask anyone you like and they'll tell you Terry Wogan is different. In a culture which so seldom allows for ambiguity, Wogan is both one of them — the Daily Mail-reading mainstream — and one of us, the people who make fun of that position. When he commentates on Eurovision, he undercuts the whole thing with irony and yet, unlike any comedian who might do the same on a sketch show, Wogan is actually there.

At this year's contest in Birmingham, he presented the show from the stage, delivering cheesy lines with no discernible embarrassment. But then, when his links were finished, he escaped to the commentary box and slipped into his alter ego. In this incarnation, as the wry, detached observer, Wogan speaks for the students and the Guardian readers but — crucially — never makes his mainstream audience feel excluded.

His success in bringing irony to the masses, long before the technique was degraded in the hands of lesser men, confirms his status as a national treasure. In an age when we are often unsure about what being British actually means, Wogan's elusive charm reminds us why we would rather live here than in Sweden, France or Belgium.



Lost world? The latest financial problem to hit the rainforest could be devastating

endangered Amazon rainforest, challenging rich governments "to contribute to forest conservation because, without money, it will not be possible to achieve what we are trying to achieve."

An IMF public relations leaflet published earlier this year claims that it now takes the environment seriously in its policy negotiations, "as severe environmental degradation can affect a country's economic performance over the long run".

In the short run, however, the IMF has passed a sudden death sentence on projects which have taken many years to build up. Brazilian agencies and the World Bank have patiently forged partnerships with state-level officials, environmental groups and indigenous communities to improve state and local-level environmental planning.

Now these groups are confused and angry as their money has disappeared. As with the rainforest itself, trust cannot quickly be restored if international agencies and national politicians decide again to back the projects.

Roberto Smeraldi, Friends of the Earth's Amazon coordinator, believes that intensive lobbying by Brazilian and overseas organisations is needed to persuade the government that the short-term gain from the cuts will be far outweighed by the long-term losses.

While congress begins to debate the cuts this week, all over Brazil giant clocks set up in city centres and on beaches will be ticking away, marking the countdown to April 22, 2000 when Brazil celebrates its 500th anniversary, eight years later than the rest of Latin America. Indigenous organisations say there is little to celebrate because for them, it has been 500 years of violence, murder and land theft. If the cuts go ahead they will have even less to celebrate, and the Amazon rainforest will be even less protected than it already is.

berries on a sustainable basis. After his death the Brazilian government came under immense pressure from the international community to combat deforestation, and in 1990 the first extractive reserves were started.

But the sense of victory was short-lived. Rubber tappers cannot compete against rubber tree plantations, and left to themselves they have found that earning a reasonable living off the land is nearly impossible. It takes a tapper a month to collect as much latex as one worker can do in a day where the trees are cultivated. The extractive reserves also have distribution problems — often it will take the tapper several days walking and boating through the forest to reach a selling point.

The circumstances are so dire that some rubber tappers are now destroying the nature in the reserves — going against everything that they fought for. "In some areas people are cutting down their wood [to sell it]. They are doing it because of necessity. If Chico was alive today he would say that things have got worse by 100 per cent."

With the collapse of their market, there is a feeling that only by diversifying into other rainforest products will the inhabitants of the reserve be able to escape from extreme poverty.

Arnobio Marques Junior, who worked as an educationalist with the tappers in the 1980s, says this was always the plan — but once the Brazilian government had won back the international community's favour by handing out the extractive reserves it conveniently forgot about the people of the Amazon.

'I know we can get money from the riches in the forest'

"After Chico's death the process of the extractive reserves was speeded up and areas were demarcated. This stopped the organised, premeditated violence because the land disputes were solved in the courts," he says.

"But in terms of political leadership nothing changed. The rubber tappers need more. They need a proper [development] programme, the introduction of new technology, investment in social areas."

Local environmentalists are urging a moderation of the prevailing Western opinion on green issues. For instance Jorge Viana, the governor-elect of the state of Acre, which includes Xapuri, is calling for an end to the moratorium on logging mahogany.

Viana, however, has the support of the local green community and the rubber tappers. He used to be a friend of Chico Mendes and is a qualified rainforest scientist. "You can't just ban something," he says. "You need to have a say in the way it will be banned. You can farm it sustainably."

The emphasis has changed from preservation to conservation. "I want to conserve the Amazon — which is different to preserving it. I want to preserve it while exploring its potential. We can't live with the poverty and destitution that we have."

He adds: "The reserves were created because the government had to, not because they wanted to. But for them to work you need to have someone with a will for them to succeed behind them. I'm from here. I know we can get money from the riches in the forest."

Viana, of the Worker's Party, will be the first governor of the Brazilian Amazon who's political roots are from the rubber tappers' fight. His term, which starts in January, will mark a new era for the rainforest.

But whether he can transform the fortunes of the rubber tappers by helping them live decently off the rainforest while not destroying it will be a challenge that no one has yet solved. In the Alto Jurua extractive reserve the population has dropped from 6,000 to 4,000 in seven years as tappers have fled rural poverty to live in shanty towns in the Amazon's cities.

Antonio Fransisco de Paula, president of the Alto Jurua Rubber Tappers Association believes that something has to be done quickly to stop the exodus because otherwise the rainforest will again be under threat.

"The rubber tappers are the guardian of the forest. If they go, the loggers will get there," he says. "Chico Mendes' dream lives on in our minds. But we don't have anything. We are just living on luck."

Eco soundings

[illegible]

... the staff and many readers of the local paper seem to disagree.

MR RENDEL might like to look at the activities of Newbury rugby club which gets £100,000 a year from Vodaphone, a telephone company which wants to take advantage of the bypass and build an HQ off greenbelt land outside the town. The club has written to its members suggesting that it might not be able to continue if Vodaphone withdraws its sponsorship, and it recommends that everyone supports Vodaphone's application. They have also sent members prepaid envelopes to wing in to the local council. Questions for Mr Rendel to ask: is this a LibDem vision of open, fair democracy? Has Vodaphone paid for the campaign?

$82,000,000,000 is the inflation-adjusted cost of the damage done by storms, floods, droughts, and fires in the first 11 months of 1998, according to Munich Ré, the world's largest re-insurer. Working with the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, they say it exceeds estimates for all the "natural" damage done in the 1980s. Bad luck? No. They say that a combination of deforestation and climate change was responsible for disasters in Central America, China and Bangladesh.

Director £140,000
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Ethelston, home of the rich and influential, has some of the most desperate schools in the country.
Catherine Bennett on a local crisis

Society

Jive talkin'

If political greenspeak gets on your nerves, try a simple remedy...

Fed up with eco-talk? Feel you've heard it all before? What's needed is a fresh way of putting the message across. So Friends of the Earth and the Guardian turned to Jive Talk, a web site where everything is translated into US street talk, and put in some extracts from speeches, books and press releases. Here's the right-wing Social Affairs Unit advising corporations how to handle pressure groups: "Some scatterin' o' trouble-making pressure groups kin inflict damage through malicious libels (down-low, against which dair be no real redress since da damn damage be done an' da damn liars be da damn pauphus), trough acts an treats o' vandalism an' terrorism, trough rent-some-crowd protests an' trough mass-media-suported boycotts.

"Dey (corporations) gots'ta be prepared t' fight da damn activists on some continuous basis by obtaining detailed intelligence about agitators who be potential-like hostile t' deir opuh'ashuns."

Or a press release from Friends of the Earth in response to the lack of any green legislation in the Queen's Speech: "Charles Secrett, directa' o' Homeys o' da damn Eart', has today dismissed accusashuns by Deputy Prime Minista' Raztus Prescott dat f***in'-E be some bit daffy on occastons as watta' off some duck's back. 'S all good. He said, dig dis: 'We have simply pointed out dat dair be no bills in da Queen's Speech t' back down Labour's electshun promise t' be da damn greenest Federal eva'. No Labour Queen's Speech o' budget has even tried t' deliva' on dis pledge. 'S all good. Massa' Prescott shouldn't bust a cap in da messenga' plum a'cuz he doesn't likes da message. Mon! O' course da damn Deputy Prime Minista' has done hiz best t' champion da environment, an' we public-like back him an' hiz tatm.

"Da bug-up-da-ass lies wit' Massa' Blair, Massa' Mandelson an' Massa' Brown. Numba' 10, da Treasury an' da damn D-T-f***in'-I plum duzn't seem t' share Prescott's enthusiasm for puttin' da environment at da damn heart o' de Regime.'"

Even news stories have another flavour: "MPs have banned genetical-like engineered crops fum restaurants an' bars in da Crib o' Commons a'cuz day duzn't meet etical an' environmental criteria. Howeva', despite dese-he'ah concerns fried chicken eaten by da public duz not got 'ta pass such strict criteria, dig dis: genetical-like engineered fried chicken, often unlabelled, be common in shops an' supuh'markets."

ECOLOGY (1)

A baffling financial decision by the Brazilian government will put more pressure on the country's precious rainforest, claim **Jan Rocha** and **Alex Wilkes**

The ploys from Brazil

The Amazon rainforest has been put seriously at risk by a $41 billion IMF economic rescue package which will be paid for by savagely cutting or ending flagship international aid projects designed to protect the forest and encourage sustainable development.

The massive G7 rainforest pilot programme (PP-G7), paid for with substantial contributions from the UK and six other rich countries, and coordinated by the World Bank, has had next year's budget slashed by two thirds by the Brazilian government. Other projects have been similarly reduced or scrapped. Critics say that it leaves the forest even less protected than before.

In the crazy logic of government finance, although the $41 billion is donated to Brazil, it becomes part of the national budget, and therefore cutting it helps to achieve the needed budget surplus. Money will be saved, although the rainforest might be lost.

The G7 programme is one of the world's most ambitious and painstakingly negotiated environmental programmes. The $61 million needed to fund the projects in 1999, will be cut to just over $6 million.

Anthony Hall, chairman of the international advisory group to the G7 programme said the news had come like a bolt from the blue and he said it was difficult to understand the reasoning behind the cuts. "The G7 countries were not consulted on these cuts and we will be meeting next week to consider the implications for the programme."

The PP-G7 is made up of 10 projects, administered by government agencies, non-governmental organisations, universities and local communities which provide for forest fire prevention, ecological corridors, monitoring, research, sustainable resource management, and support for extractive reserves.

The Brazilian environmental organisation, ISA (the Socio-Ambiental Institute), says that if the cuts are approved by congress, they will spell the death sentence for the programme which is in most cases the only money available for these projects.

In the western Amazon state of Acre for example, the population has just elected a member of the Workers Party (PT), forest engineer Jorge Viana, as their governor. It was hoped that the many indigenous and extractive communities would have someone in power who is in tune with their needs instead of those of the cattle ranchers and loggers. But in a state with little income of its own, the G7 money is vital for most of their projects.

The IMF has passed a sudden death sentence on projects which have taken years to build up

Marcio Santilli, ISA coordinator, expressed the perplexity of many environmental groups who will be affected: "People are asking themselves what could have led the Cardoso government to destroy exactly those projects which have generated the best results in the indigenous and environmental areas, at exactly the moment that forest fires and burning are on the increase?"

World Bank and IMF claims to have gone green now appear very hollow. In a week where Clare Short, secretary of state for international development, is giving a major speech on the environment it also exposes the conflicts between Britain's aid and economic policies.

The World Bank bills itself as "the largest lender to developing countries for forest conservation and management", with Brazil as a cornerstone of its efforts. In May its president, James Wolfensohn, announced a World Bank and WWF initiative to support the Brazilian government to permanently protect 26 million hectares of forest free from the threat of loggers or ranchers. In the 1980s their fight against mercenary destruction became a symbol of the global campaign to save the rainforest.

Their leader, Chico Mendes, became internationally known. He was compared to Gandhi because of the way he organised peaceful occupations of threatened land, and when he was gunned down by ranchers at his Xapuri home ten years ago this month, he became one of the green movement's first martyrs.

Mendes's dream was for the creation of "extractive reserves" — land where rubber tappers could live off the forest collecting latex, nuts and

ECOLOGY (2)

Chico forgotten?

The rubber tappers of the Brazilian rainforest are being forced out by poverty. **Alex Bellos** argues that if they go the legacy of Chico Mendes will be lost, along with much more

Francisco Paulo da Silva walks a short way through the forest until he reaches a rubber tree. He points at the diagonal grooves etched in the bark that show he once tapped it for rubber.

The markings are all old, says da Silva. "I tapped rubber for 60 years, but three years ago I had to stop. Rubber lost all its value. There was no way I could live. So I had to do something else."

Da Silva, 75, survives by living off the fruits and vegetables he plants by his small wooden hut at the edge of the Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve 30 miles from the town of Xapuri in the Brazilian Amazon.

But he is one of the lucky ones, only needing to grow food for himself and his wife Clotilde. As the price of rubber has dropped, thousands of tappers and their families are facing desperate poverty. "There are people who are suffering more than you can imagine," he says.

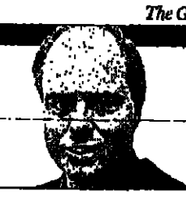
Vigilio Padilha dos Santos, 46, who lives a further three hours by boat upriver, adds that life has never been so bad: "At the furthest end of the reserve there are people who are going hungry. Some have left for the city but many are staying there."

The desperate situation is doubly tragic because of the rubber tappers' long battle to live and work in the



Martyr... Chico Mendes fought and died for the rainforest

Wheen's world



Francis Wheen on... the lady's talent for forgetting ● Fayed's web woes ● De Bono's water logic

Maggie's amnesia



Ignore what you may have read elsewhere: Margaret Thatcher passionately supports the right of British courts to sit in judgment on offences committed long ago, in faraway countries, against people who were not British citizens. Ignore, too, any statements allegedly issued in her name pleading for "compassion". Thatcher maintains that our only duty is to the victims: if this means putting an octogenarian in the dock, so be it.

That, at least, is what she believed nine years ago, when she persevered with her War Crimes Bill even after the House of Lords had rejected it and senior colleagues had begged her to think again. As Geoffrey Howe notes in his memoirs: "... the principal arguments which had swayed their Lordships — and which impressed me — were reluctance to extend British jurisdiction, extraterritorially as well as 'retrospectively', and to do so for the sake of bringing proceedings, on the basis of evidence that was bound to be shaky because ancient, against defendants who were already in the twilight of their lives."

But Thatcher insisted on using the Parliament Act to overrule the Lords. She had recently visited Babi Yar in Kiev, the memorial to 30,000 Jews murdered by the Nazis, and was determined that justice should be done, however belatedly.

The lady's not for turning, but when it suits her purposes she has a great talent for forgetting: there is no reference to the War Crimes Bill in the 1,600 pages of her two-volume autobiography. And the amnesia seems to be contagious. During the past week, Tory MPs and right-wing editorialists have been harrumphing indignantly about the "dangerous precedent" that would be set if a person were tried in one country for crimes committed elsewhere.

In fact, this supposedly unprecedented notion was accepted quite happily by the last Conservative government. I don't recall any great controversy about the Sexual Offences (Incitement and Conspiracy) Bill of 1996, which made it possible to prosecute child-molesters who commit their crimes abroad. The principle was extended further in the United Nations Personnel Bill, designed to protect UN peacekeepers anywhere in the world from attack or intimidation, which sped through Parliament with all-party support shortly before the 1997 general election.

"The Bill as drafted therefore creates extra-territorial jurisdiction over such offences," Lord Chesham explained. "It ensures that offenders can be tried in this country, wherever their offences occurred, and makes their offences extraditable." So, in theory, the British government could demand that a Serb general who menaced a UN convoy in Bosnia should be sent over here to stand trial at the Old Bailey.

In the 1970s, Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative press often complained about hypocrisy on human rights. Why, they asked, was the left's anger against General Pinochet not applied also to the murderous brutes who held sway in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union? It was a fair question.

Now, however, the right-wing "champions of freedom" are impaled on their own double standards. Some, like Paul Johnson, pretend Pinochet was a pussycat who never harmed anyone. But the more common response is exemplified by a letter from the veteran schemer Brian Crozier to the Telegraph last week. First, he reminds us that Salvador Allende was "elected on only 36 per cent of the vote", as if this justified replacing him with a man who had no votes at all. ("The Labour government which came to office in 1974, a few months after the Chilean coup, had 37 per cent of the vote; even Crozier's friend Thatcher was elected in 1979 with "only" 43 per cent.)

"General Pinochet saved his country from civil war and runaway inflation," Crozier continues, heroically resisting the temptation to add that he made the trains run on time. "His methods were regrettably harsh, but no worse than Allende's."

That last phrase is simply untrue, of course, but his comments about the old thug's regrettable harshness are most interesting. For, as Crozier confessed in his book Free Agent a few years ago, he himself "played a modest part" in destabilising the Allende government by organising a CIA-financed propaganda campaign. When Allende was duly toppled... "I spent several days closeted with the dictator, General Augusto Pinochet, for whom I had drafted (in Spanish) 15 clauses for a new constitution. Fourteen of them were in the final document." He also became an adviser to the Chilean armed forces and security services.

For some reason, Crozier neglected to mention any of this in his letter to the Telegraph. Why so bashful, Brian?

Lew Knee has taken over the guest book

Sadly, it is my duty to report that Mr Lew Knee of Atlanta, Georgia, was removed from Mohamed Al-Fayed's self-aggrandising website hours after I mentioned him on this page.

However, the mischief-maker responsible for Lew Knee has managed to smuggle a few other messages into the official guest book. One, supposedly from Nadia Bigette of Western Australia, comments: "It's such a shame that the Queen wanted her [Diana] out of the way. I hope Mr Fayed uncovers the truth... If it's any help to him, there's some of us out in the colonies who wish he was King instead of the stuffy old Windsors!"

The hapless webmaster can hardly be blamed, since many of the genuine letters are no less batty than the fakes. "I am one of many who have unanswered questions about the 'accident'," writes Anthony Kinzie of New Zealand. "The Titanic reminds us that the 'establishment' has not changed in 90 years." Another conspiracy theorist, Teresa L Vason of North Carolina, suggests "Prince Charles himself should be investigated" for possible complicity in the crime. Steve Meacham of Watford adds that "you cannot imagine the pleasure and hope that you have given to all Fulham supporters".

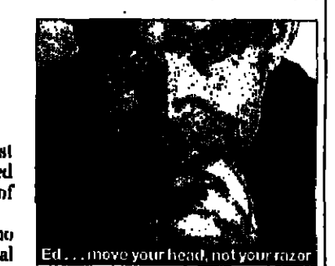
Still, life and commerce must go on — as we are reminded by the photo of Harrods department store, tastefully juxtaposed with pictures of Diana, Dodi and a British pat. There is also a glowing tribute from Maree Hubbell of Albuquerque: "My husband and I were recently in London and visited Harrods — a fabulous one-of-a-kind emporium!"

Only 19 shopping days until Christmas...



Eagle eyes... Harrods is on the look-out for Knee

Don't give gloves to a man with no hands



Ed... move your head, not your razor

If our beloved government has a fault — something which many Guardian readers find hard to believe — it is a tendency to leap aboard bandwagons whose wheels have fallen off. Blair invited Noel Gallagher to No 10 soon after the release of Be Here Now had exposed Oasis as derivative duds; he discovered the joys of capitalism at the very moment the system began devouring itself. Now, following his demand for more creativity in Whitehall, the Department of Education has called in Dr Edward de Bono "to develop bright ideas on schools and jobs".

More than 200 officials from the department recently attended a lecture in which de Bono described his "Six Thinking Hats system" of decision-making. The idea is that civil servants should put on a red hat when they want to talk about hunches and instincts, a yellow hat if are listing the advantages of a project, a black hat while playing devil's advocate, and so on. "Without wishing to boast," he says, "this is the first new way of thinking to be developed for 2,400 years since the days of Plato, Socrates and Aristotle."

Without wishing to boast, De Bono claims also to have invented "lateral thinking" and "water logic". Here's an example of how they work, from his suggestively titled book I Am Right, You Are Wrong: "How often does someone who is using a traditional wet razor stop to consider whether instead of moving the razor it might be easier to keep the razor still and to move the head instead? In fact it is rather better. But no one does try it because there is 'no problem to fix.'"

Men at the Department of Education who attempt this shaving technique will soon discover why it hasn't caught on: the result looks like an out-take from the Texas Chainsaw Massacre. What other useful tips can they expect? "You can't dig a hole in a different place by digging the same hole deeper." "With a problem, you look for a solution." "A bird is different from an aeroplane, although both fly through the air." "Gloves make a poor Christmas present for a man with no hands." I made that last one up, but its water logic is undeniable.

In another manual, Tactics: The Art And Science Of Success, De Bono offered "the lessons that might be learned from a number of people who would generally be regarded as 'successful'". The millionaires he invited us to emulate included UShotelier Harry Helmsley (later convicted of massive tax evasion) and Robert Maxwell. "At the end of the book," De Bono advised, "the reader should say, 'Why not me?'"

If millions go missing from the Department of Education's pension fund, we shall know Whitehall has risen to the challenge.

BRENT COUNCIL

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- **Tel: 0181 937 1058 Fax: 0181 937 1056. Please quote reference No. CDD/3 for the SCN Manager post and CDD/4 for the CN Officer post.**
- **Closing date for applications is 16 December 1998.**
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ENGLISH HERITAGE

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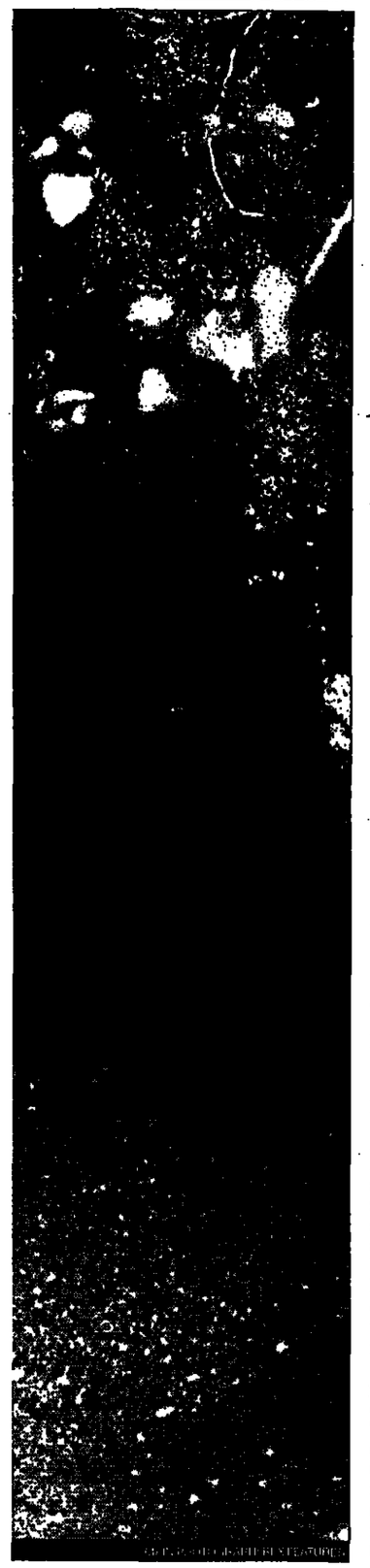
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PermIT



Carmel Fitzsimons learned she had won Ireland's prestigious Kavanagh Award in the same week that OUP decided to axe its poetry list. But is she downhearted? Not a bit of it

Rhyme without reason?

Blackwell is certainly more suited to being an independent. He's a big fan of Master P, the New Orleans-based rapper who has built his No Limit music and film business into a multi-million-dollar outfit in the past two years. "He's making his own films, issuing them straight to video, and they sell spectacularly. That's exactly what I want to do using DVD." DVD, a digital video camera that Blackwell claims will slash costs and revolutionise film-making, is his current passion. He has two films in production — Third World Cop, a Jamaican thriller, and Black & White, a comedy set in New York featuring Claudia Schiffer and Mike Tyson.

Blackwell's no movie novice — he helped finance the seminal Jamaican film The Harder They Come and has produced a number of local films, including last year's Dancehall Queen. This retelling of Cinderella in ragga robes broke all local box-office records, even holding Titanic off the number-one spot. By setting budgets between $250,000 and $2 million *for each production*, Blackwell aims to get a low-budget, high-turnover industry going. This may look odd alongside his strategy for the hotel business — only the most elegant and expensive sites will do — but he sees no paradox. "Hotels are like theatre," he says. "The place should be happening, it should be fun."

It was at a hotel, where he was teaching water-skiing, that Blackwell spotted the first act he ever signed. Island's debut album was Lance Haywood At The Half Moon Hotel, featuring veteran Jamaican guitarist Ernest Ranglin. Ranglin also became Blackwell's debut release on his new label Palm Pictures, with the acclaimed CD In Search Of The Lost Riddim.

While many independent record labels started with black music and moved on to rock, Blackwell has not forgotten his roots. He is now championing Senegalese star Baaba Maal in much the same way as he did Bob Marley 25 years ago. "When I met *Bob, he had great charisma, great* songs. I asked him if he was good on stage and he told me he was great on stage, so he had everything. I had already been behind artists who had become successful, and knew and loved Jamaican music. People couldn't believe I was ready to finance this wild Jamaican guy, but I believed in him. It's the same with Baaba."

Since he returned to Jamaica last year, Blackwell has set up a number of local educational programmes. "Music, films, hotels, education, sport," he says. "It's an overall foundation for what's going on at the moment. Jamaica is very creative, and the basic idea was to provide more resources so the people could find an easier way of expressing themselves and standing on their own two feet. You always tend to do what your roots have led you to — and in my case that was identifying musicians or people of talent, helping to get them going.

"Jamaica's a place that has always inspired me, given me a source of strength. Much has changed here, but not the essence of the people. And they're great people."

well spoke out against him in the Los Angeles Times. Days later he left Island and the PolyGram board.

"It's a more corporate climate than it used to be because there's so much more money involved," Blackwell says of today's music industry. "The record business was something you got into because you loved music. Nobody went into it to make money."

She could have been ringing from Kilburn, to give me hell about library fines. But she was calling from Inniskeen in County Monaghan and she sounded like my firm, but fair, grandmother.

"You had better sit down, my dear," said the reedy Irish voice, on the phone line from a farmhouse in the stony Northern borderlands of rural Ireland. "Because you are our winner of the 1998 Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award."

I sat down. One thousand pounds can make you light-headed, even if the children have already turned it into a showjumping pony. And it's *not just, in poetry terms, good* money. The Kavanagh Award is one of Ireland's most prestigious prizes, with previous winners including Paul Durkin and Eleanor ni Chuilleanain, Michael Coady, Peter Sirr.

In one sense it's a good time to win: at last it is cool to be Irish. We are no longer the barmen and waitresses of the world. It's culture, not boozing, that is flourishing again in Ireland, just as it did at the last turn of the century.

But in another sense I couldn't have picked a worse time. Last week's decision by Oxford University Press to close its poetry list and drop its 50 poets suggests lean days ahead: a poetic recession, which is closer to the spirit of Patrick Kavanagh himself, who almost starved to death on the streets of Dublin in the fifties.

My award was being presented in Inniskeen, his birthplace, as part of the Patrick Kavanagh Weekend. I decided to have a quick word first with the poet and publisher Peter Fallon. Just to check whether he thought anyone would turn up, like.

He put my mind at rest. The problems of English poetry are not the problems of Irish poetry. "Here in Ireland we sell more books of poetry every year. In the day-to-day life of our society the idea of poetry is closer to the centre. Most people in Ireland have a greater sense of poets and poetry than in England."

He added this example. When Tony Blair addressed the Irish parliament last week he did not quote any poetry. "It would be unthinkable for the Irish Taoiseach to do such a thing. Poetry has a centrality to our lives."

He conceded that the closure of OUP's poetry arm could put pressure on other publishers to give hospitality to names on the OUP list instead of seeking out new voices. But in consolation, he added: "Poets of stature do not come swimming down the stream 35 strong a year. One a year is cause for jubilation."



As we drove where Patrick Kavanagh (above) once walked, the whole bus began to sing

In those bandit hills of Monaghan, how they rejoice in the poet who swam down their river Fane and onto the stony grey soil of Mucker. These folk even speak in poetry. Describing an old fellow who loved life, a local told me: "Ah, and it will kill him to die." Playwright and poet Tom McIntyre gave me an everlasting image when he said that the Irish for ladybird translates as the little cow of God.

That's how it was all weekend. It was crammed like a Christmas stocking to the toe with drinking, eating, poetry-reciting, drinking, plays, drinking, story-telling beside an open hearth, drinking. Once in a while we crossed the frosty fields under starlight just to breathe in the quiet beauty of the place. Then back to the poetry and the drink.

On a bus tour of Kavanagh country, actor Gene Carroll became the poet, telling stories of the black hills of Shancoduff. But it was not like the bus tours you might sneer at on holiday. Up the windy roads bagpipers came to meet us. As we drove along the bungry lanes that Patrick Kavanagh had walked in his desperation, the whole bus started to sing his love lament Raglan Road. You wouldn't need to be a poet to start feeling the tears.

The organisers at the Patrick Kavanagh Centre sent word by whisper at three in the afternoon: there was to be an unscheduled, secret wreath-laying on his grave.

It had been thought this tradition of the awards would have to be abandoned after an incident this summer when Patrick Kavanagh's modern gravestone was pulled down, *smashed into smithereens and* buried in the bog. The desecration was part of a long-standing Kavanagh family feud.

No one is naming names but the grave is now marked by a simple wooden cross, which is what the Kavanagh family believes the poet would have wanted, rather than the modern keyhole-style stone.

The Kavanagh Society does not know where to turn, so we said our prayers for him almost furtively in the blue of a sharp November day.

Later, I read my poems to a packed hall, crowded with dignitaries and people I had met in the pub. One of them was an elegy I wrote written in memory of the nine-year-old daughter of two friends.

As I read, it occurred to me how strange it is that we give children so much poetry and then take it away once they are grown. Every day one of my children works on a poem or reads poetry at school. And then a veil is drawn. There is no poetry on television or on radio. The most potent way of describing the human condition is rendered inaccessible.

Even the truly magical Patrick Kavanagh Weekend is at a loss for a sponsor next year. A whiskey company was keen, but only if they could change the name to the Paddy Kavanagh Award.

To quote Kavanagh himself, it would be "a thrush singing its plagiarised version of the blackbird's song". Let's drink to the fact that it sings at all.

The Parent Trap

Did you bring your divorcing parents back together?

Or did your children patch up your marriage?

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Arts

Chris Blackwell brought us Bob Marley, U2 and Roxy Music. But then he walked away from his world-famous record label. **Garth Cartwright** finds out how he's managing on his own

No Island no cry


One man and his dog... Chris Blackwell contemplates a loss cluttered life. Left, Bob Marley, his greatest protege

Sitting in Chris Blackwell's office, I notice a black-and-white photo of a man aboard a yacht. The devil-may-care expression looks familiar. Gazing closer, I find a fading inscription. The dedication is to Blackwell and the signature that of Errol Flynn. Even as an adolescent, it appears, Blackwell had a gift for fascinating friendships.

This should not come as a surprise. The gossip columnist Nigel Dempster once numbered Blackwell among the 10 most attractive men on the planet, and for the past 40 years he has shown a gift for cultivating outstanding talent. As founder of Island Records, he unleashed ska, played midwife to British folk rock, signed Roxy Music, moulded Bob Marley and reggae into international commodities, invented Grace Jones and turned U2 into the biggest rock band on the planet.

Blackwell sold Island to PolyGram for $300 million in 1989, and resigned as non-executive chairman after a boardroom bust-up last November. But he is still a major force in entertainment and the Jamaican economy. His company Islandlife's interests range from luxury hotels to retail shops, to film production and a new record label. His Caribbean background left him with a love of hustling, as well as teaching him the value of taking things easy.

Blackwell, the son of wealthy white Jamaicans, was born and schooled in Britain, but made his fortune the far side of the Pond. He got into the music business four decades ago, importing American R'n'B singles and selling them to Jamaican sound systems. These days he has offices in Miami, New York and London but is based at Goldeneye, near the faded banana port of Oracabessa on Jamaica's north coast. The property once belonged to James Bond creator Ian Fleming, and Blackwell has made it one of the world's most exclusive resorts.



Clad in shorts and flip-flops, Blackwell looks more like a beachcomber than a man whose wealth is measured in hundreds of millions. At 61, his face bears the lines of a lifetime spent in the sunshine. Only his flinty blue eyes hint at why a rival once described him as a "baby-faced killer". We exchange pleasantries but Blackwell looks exhausted. It has been a hectic weekend, even by his standards. Having recently bought and developed a hundred acres of coastline, he has just introduced it to the public with a jazz and blues festival. Hurricane Mitch turned the event into a Caribbean Glastonbury, and on the first day only one artist got to play.

Blackwell hopes the rather predictably named James Bond Beach will host five or six music festivals a year. Ambitious as this may seem, neighbouring Montego Bay has launched the successful Sunsplash and Sunfest reggae festivals and the proximity of the US (Miami is 90 minutes away) makes Jamaica an exotic location for tourists who fancy good sounds to go with their beach holidays.

Blackwell still has the clipped accent of an Old Harrovian and, more surprisingly, a quiet manner. Though he has dealt with generations of musicians, he has not absorbed their affectations. Instead, he resembles a Bond character — albeit a benevolent one — omnipotent, all-knowing, a master of musical destinies.

He's also a very private person. Before the interview is granted, I'm instructed not to ask personal questions. Yet Blackwell has never been tainted by scandal. He recently married his longtime partner, designer Mary Vinson, and the couple maintain a low profile, in part because of Vinson's struggle with bone marrow cancer. His public falling-out with the PolyGram board over Island last year is something he also chooses to speak of with delicacy.

"It was a feeling of relief, not grief," he says of walking out on the company he founded 40 years ago. "I'm really enjoying what I'm doing now. Maybe it'll turn out that I'm completely wrong, but what I'm trying to do wasn't possible within the PolyGram system. My ideas on film and music essentially blurred; you can do that in small companies, but not in large ones."

Blackwell spent much of the early nineties developing his hotels in Miami's South Beach and Jamaica, and found it hard to fit in when he moved to run Island's US offices two years ago. Annual overheads had risen from $8 million to $35 million, and PolyGram chief Alain Levy refused to sanction his plans to move into film and video. When PolyGram's president, Eric Kronfeld, publicly suggested that most African-American males had a criminal record, Blackwell resigned.

Notes & Queries

N&Q on the web
theguardian.co.uk/

Edited by Joseph Harker

Brains and drains • Magnetic personalities • Caught over a barrel • Shotgun diplomacy

If the policy of "education, education, education" were realised and, say, 90 per cent of the adult population achieved middle-class status, how would it deal with the shortage of people to do jobs like maintaining the sewers?

● They would of course do what previous governments have done and encourage immigration to create a cheap unskilled workforce which could be used to take the blame when things start to go wrong.
Ian Falconer, Edinburgh.

● Level of education correlates not at all with being middle class, as the questioner suggests, and only slightly with type of employment (Ludwig Wittgenstein once worked as a hospital porter while John Major had a job as a prime minister for a while).

Everyone between leaving school or university and embarking on their desired career should be obliged to spend two years doing jobs that need doing but that nobody wants to do. This would ensure that the jobs got done, nobody had to spend their life on them, and people who later went into politics or advertising would have some notion of what the world of work actually entails.
Michael Hutton, Camberwell, London.

● Such workers would have to be paid very large salaries. They would become, thereby, members of an effluent social class.
Gary Cornford, Balham, London SW12.

Is there any English word that rhymes with "orange?"

● The store's been shut for years now, but did Gorringe's sell oranges?
Roger Crossley, London W10.

● Perhaps it will make you cringe
Or even cause you to binge
To find that the word infringe
Actually rhymes with orange,
Plus several more that hinge
On sounds of a similar tinge.
Rollo Bruce, Horsforth, Leeds.

● The 1985 Penguin Rhyming Dictionary considers the final syllable only and thus claims to rhyme "orange" with the likes of "syringe", "scavenge" and "lozenge". These, though, are plainly weak rhymes. Walker's Rhyming Dictionary offered "sporange", meaning a sporecase, which is indeed in the Oxford English Dictionary. I'd like to see you use it in a casual couplet, though...
Ian Shuttleworth, N Kensington, London W10.

● There is a hill in Monmouthshire called Blorenge.
Mrs J Tanner, West Wickham, Kent.

● It's rumoured that William of
Orange
Was one bracket short of a door hinge
So unkempt and hairy
Was the old fruit, that Mary
(His consort) renamed him Will More Fringe.
Deborah Jackson, Combe Down, Bath.

Do magnets work in space? If so, where do they point to?

● Yes, magnets do work in space. Ferromagnetic material (which magnets used in compasses are made of) responds to the presence of a magnetic field, however and wherever that field is produced.

A magnetic field has a sense of direction, and magnets tend to line up with that direction. Which way a magnet points depends on which direction the magnetic field points in the given place. In the case of a terrestrial compass this will generally be the direction of the Earth's magnetic field, but this can change if you place another magnet nearby.

Large astronomical bodies (such as the Earth and the Sun) tend to produce magnetic fields that pervade the space around them.

A magnet in space would feel the Earth's magnetic field if it were near the Earth and would tend to point towards the magnetic North pole, just as it would on the Earth's surface. The strength of the field drops off as you go further away from the Earth so, at sufficiently large distances, the fields produced by other bodies can affect the magnet.

Near the Sun, for example, the Earth has a negligible effect but the Sun's own magnetic field is stronger, so the magnet would point towards the Sun's "North pole". Farther afield, away from any stars, the Milky Way itself contains a magnetic field caused by the dynamo effect of galactic rotation. The magnet would therefore tend to line up in whatever direction this rather complicated galactic field was pointing.
Dr Peter Coles, Astronomy Unit, Queen Mary & Westfield College, London E1.

Does the Albanian language belong to the Indo-European grouping? If so, is it affiliated to any others in the group? If not, what are its origins?

● Albanian is widely regarded as the only surviving member of the Illyrian branch of Indo-European languages. Whilst there is enough historical evidence to firmly place Albanian in this group, there is not enough evidence to demonstrate a clear relationship to any other Indo-European language. The difficulty of proving this relationship arises, first, because there is the scarcity of any written material that predates the 16th century; and second, surrounding languages — such as Latin, Greek and Macedonian — have provided loan words into Albanian throughout its history.

The Indo-European family of languages provides nearly all of the languages of Europe, the only non-members being Basque (which has no known relation to any other language), the Finno-Ugric group (including Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian) and the Altaic group of languages (which includes Turkish and Azarbaijani).
David Gladwell, Crosby, Liverpool.


Cold turkey ... Addicts and ex-addicts refer to the twitching symptoms of withdrawal as 'clucking', as it is similar to the way turkeys move when they walk
PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN REEVELL

What is the origin of the phrase "over a barrel" — is it rude?

● To be "whipped over a barrel" is to suffer one of the many methods of punishment invented by sailors, who have few rivals in this field.

A mere whipping is painful enough, but seafarers discovered that the ordeal could be greatly increased by first wrapping the victim face-first around a large barrel, and binding his hands tightly to his feet. Thus stretched, the flesh of the back is not only less able to disperse the force of a whiplash, but also more likely to tear and gape when the skin is finally broken.

To complete the punishment, the miscreant would have stinging seawater splashed on his open wounds, and then be left on deck as a deterrent to others.
Mathew Hendry, Cupar, Fife.

Why do we say "cold turkey" when a person is attempting to stop taking drugs?

● One of the many unpleasant symptoms of withdrawal from opiate- and opioid-based drugs is an extreme physical restlessness which, among other things, manifests itself in a fairly extreme form of involuntary twitching. One of the main aspects of this is a kind of simultaneous (involuntary) shrugging of the shoulders and slight forward movement of the head. Addicts and ex-addicts (like myself) refer to this as "clucking" as it's similar to the way turkeys and chickens move when they walk. I also feel that addicts interpret the "cold" part to mean the extreme shivering that can accompany the twitching.
Name supplied, Twickenham, Middlesex.

Is there any scientific basis for regarding some colours as harmonising with each other and some as clashing, or is this just a cultural convention?

● Perhaps one cannot detect easily the "general ocular discomfort" brought on by viewing red and green together (Notes & Queries, November 11) as I find these colours "go" very well — unlike, typically, orange and pink. I have always thought that in nature it is difficult to find clashing colours. I don't usually bother too much to colour co-ordinate a pot of freshly picked flowers — garden or wild — as they always look beautiful.
Janet Probyn, Zomba, Malawi.

If I were given a loaded gun and diplomatic immunity, would it be all right to go and shoot General Pinochet?

● I would suggest no, because of the direct consequences for yourself. Killing is an action that leaves a potential within your mind for very unpleasant, painful effects in the future. However, if it were of benefit to others to kill Pinochet it may be worth your accepting these unpleasant consequences for the greater good. Those who wish for retribution can contemplate how Pinochet, in his next life, is going to experience a painful and terrifying world as a result of his evil, destructive actions, and perhaps be able to develop compassion for him.
Gen Kelsang Delek, Tilopa Buddhist Centre, Vancouver, Canada.

Any answers?


To what does the "pied" refer in the Pied Piper of Hamelin?
Roger O'Keefe, Cambridge.

When was the word "quack" first used to describe a bogus doctor, and what is the association with ducks?
Rose Gamble, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

The hearing aid issued by the NHS at my local hospital for slight deafness distorts music on CDs or tapes although it is accurate for speech. Why is this and what can I do to improve the quality of sound?
D Gibbins, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.

When was the first passport issued, and by whom?
Avni Eadee, Rome, Italy.

Into which bin do the blue coloured bottles go?
John Levitt, Leek, Staffs.

Why are other economies — Japan and the United States, for example — able to manage inflation with interest rates considerably lower than our own?
Chris Pearson, Colchester, Essex.

Post answers to Notes & Queries, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171-239 9935. email: nq@guardian.co.uk. Please remember to include your address and phone number.

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Parents

Happy days

A parents' guide to fun with the kids

Elisabeth Luard



Food writer and novelist Elisabeth Luard, 56, lives in Wales, the Hebrides and London with her husband Nicholas. Her book Family Life told of bringing up Casper, Francesca, Poppy and Honey in Andalucia and France, ending with the death of Francesca, aged 29, from Aids. Still Life is published on December 10 by Bantam.

Best day out: A pilgrimage to Rocio, in Spain, which means the Virgin of the Dew. We went by mule cart and slept under the stars around a camp fire. The girls wore frilly skirts and danced. It was very wild and enormously exciting, and people were really sweet to us. At the time Honey (the youngest) was five and Casper (the oldest) was 10.

Best day in: Every year in Spain we did a nativity play with all the local children. It was total anarchy, fuelled by chips and ice-cream. There was no adult interference — and never a dry eye in the house afterwards.

Worst day ever: Travelling between London and Spain one year, we pitched our tents at the bottom of a hill. It rained and washed us away. We just had to climb out sopping wet at about 4am and stop around a mudbath suitable for sumo wrestlers.

Favourite book: Asterix books, which the children could read (and get the jokes) in three languages.

Favourite food: Singapore Fried Noodles — especially from a restaurant that was near Cambridge Circus, and there were lots of Chinese children racing around being worse than mine, which I liked.

Most successful toy: Most of our toys were live. The girls had an exquisite china dolls' tea set, and they used to use Barnardo, the donkey's, cowpats as chocolate cake.

Most awkward question: I was much more of an embarrassment to them. I think the most awkward questions were me asking them about boyfriends and girlfriends.

Best advice for other parents: As soon as they are old enough to play pat-a-cake, teach them how to cook.

Interview by Annie Taylor

Boots the Chemists is to give free contraceptives to children as young as 13, it was revealed yesterday. Why not go the whole hog and give them out in supermarkets, too, asks **Yvonne Roberts**

Too young to unwrap a condom?



Affairs of the heart . . . we ignore our children's sexuality at our peril — and theirs. The more protection they have, the better

PHOTOGRAPH: NANCY HONEY

What's my response as the mother of a teenage girl to the news that Boots in Glasgow is offering free confidential contraceptive advice to 13-year-olds and up? Yes, yes and yes.

Of course I'd prefer that my 14-year-old was into Little Women, Girl Guides and pony gymkhanas, at least that way I'd know how she was occupied while I — and millions of other mature adults — participate in what appears to be the new national winter sport, experiencing sex vicariously by ogling it on the telly. But she isn't. Instead, she and thousands of other teenagers like her have to survive as robustly as they can living in the carnal zone that passes for daily life equipped with desperately poor information.

As it happens, my daughter goes to an enlightened school with good sex education, she reads the unfairly maligned teenage magazines that show the size and shape of willies (so curiosity isn't such a pull) and which give tips on how to say no. Above all, like many daughters of middle England, interests and aspirations distract her (for now) marginally more than matters of the boyfriend's flesh.

But for very many girls, as young as 11 and 12, the illusion of love, sold so hard by adults, is pushing them to behave in a way that may risk not only their health (one in 10 young people suffer from a sexually transmitted disease) but also their lifelong prospects if they become a mother prematurely young.

According to the Daily Mail, Boots' pilot project is a joint venture with a local NHS Trust. The clinic will be in a private room where the Pill and condoms will be available. Health workers will be on hand to give advice on issues such as HIV.

Valerie Riches of the rightwing pressure group *Family and Youth Concern* told the Daily Mail yesterday that she believed that Boots' pilot scheme will give the signal to children, "'Go and have sex'. It will increase pregnancies and abortions because young people simply cannot cope with contraception." How dangerously wrong can you be?

What's required is to lay aside prejudice and examine the research — which is precisely what the Department of Health has done all year, in four task forces examining aspects of teenage pregnancy. The Social Exclusion Unit is also at work and the two departments will launch a joint initiative in the New Year.

Ironically, those against providing contraceptive advice to the young and those in favour of it probably share the same goal: to encourage young people to delay having sex for as long *as possible; to ensure that they are* willing and confident; to avoid health risks and pregnancy. The critics' methods — pretend that 11-year-olds don't *snog* at bus *stops as if they're* candidates for a sex-addiction clinic; impose blanket censorship; answer no questions; administer liberal doses of shame — have failed to a truly damning extent in Britain. We have the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the western world, except the US. A British teenager under 16 is 10 times more likely to conceive than her Dutch equivalent; a third of pregnant teenagers will have abortions; rates of chlamydia, associated with infertility, are highest among 16- to 19-year-olds.

A 10-year study conducted by Janet Holland, among others, at South Bank University, London, and published in April this year told us: "Unsafe sex is still the norm for young women." Holland said that the young women interviewed "spoke of not using condoms, of making no protest at rape; of accepting violence; of coming under pressure to have *unwanted . . . penetrative sex*".

Now, as a decade ago, sex was something the majority of girls endured as a male pleasure. That surrender is rooted in ignorance. If that is the catastrophic fall-out from continuing the rightwing pretence of protecting teenage "innocence" while encouraging the market's right to wrap sex around any and every consumer item, then I want my child to live longer and happier by knowing all there is to know about relationships, reproduction, love and intimacy from an early age.

Roger Ingham, Director of the Centre for Sexual Health Research at Southampton University, has studied the outcome of this more liberal approach in Europe for several years. In the *sixties, for instance, in the Nether*lands, concern about the number of terminations led to policies being overhauled. Now, the country has *one of the lowest abortion and* teenage pregnancy rates. In Holland, Ingham says, relationship and education begins at primary school level; there is more discussion between parents and children and contraceptive advice is available in secondary schools.

What are the results? In the Netherlands, 50 per cent of teenagers who have sex for the first time use protection — in Britain, it's 20 per cent. A majority of the Dutch express no regret after their first experience, the opposite, among girls, is true here. In Britain, the majority of girls say they have their first experience of intercourse prompted by love or commitment; for boys it's peer pressure or physical attraction. In the Netherlands, 60 per cent of both boys and girls give reasons of love and commitment.

Teaching sexual health, instead of sermonising about immorality, appears to encourage a tragically rare commodity among many young people in Britain — mutual respect. "We have been conducting this kind of work for a long time now", says Roger Ingham, "so we can speak with great confidence when we say the more open and liberal a country, the more individuals tend to behave responsibly. "When people challenge that view, I say, 'I've years of research on my side, what have you got?'"

Boots in Glasgow will offer the morning-after pill, more precisely a pill that works for 72 hours after sex. Jenny Tonge, a Liberal Democrat MP and a family planning doctor for 30 years, has been campaigning for the pill to be available in chemists and from school nurses (and why not in supermarkets, too?) backed by a powerful public health campaign that tells young girls that a baby too young can mean a lifetime of poverty.

If the Government's new strategy is to have any impact at all, the Boots service needs to be replicated; sex education must be part of the *national curriculum and begin at* seven or eight; contraception clinics for teenagers (such as those run by Brook Advisory Centres) need to be expanded; abortion has to be offered. *In short, it's time that we adults were* grown- up enough to accept that — in the seedy world we have created — our children deserve knowledge and *genuine protection.*

Last week a High Court judge said fathers are getting better at bringing up children. He's got his learned finger on the pulse, says **Dave Hill**

Welcome to the New Dad

In the opinion of Mr Justice Cazalet, a judge in the Family Division of the High Court, "fathers are much better equipped to look after their children nowadays than they were 10 years ago". Could it be that a judge has — for once — placed his learned finger somewhere near the pulse of modern times?

This may appear unlikely. The exertions of the Child Support Agency and a plethora of horror stories about violent or abusive fathers have got us all in a flap about fatherhood.

Only a fool would not be troubled by this. But only those who never look further than headlines will have failed to detect signs of *trends that challenge some of our* most deep-rooted assumptions about what kind of parent a man can and ought to be.

Some of the evidence for this is, perhaps, so obvious that we have simply stopped noticing it. When an unknown "neighbour" knocked on my door and asked for the taxi fare to the hospital because "my wife has just had a baby", I knew he was lying; after all, if his wife had just given birth, surely he'd have been there? The close attendance of fathers when their children are born is now considered routine, and media images of anxious dads-to-be pacing hospital corridors, smoking, have become quaint.

As customs have evolved, old "common sense" convictions are being undermined. The belief that men should be closely involved in their children's upbringing is thoroughly established: a recent European survey showed that 85 per cent of both sexes held precisely that view, while yesterday's Social Attitudes Survey found that only *one in four people in Britain still* believe that it is "a man's job to earn money and a woman's job to look after the family".

Meanwhile, a string of academic studies have demolished the belief that the rigid distinctions often visible in the parenting conduct of men and women reflect eternal "natural" laws. For example, the results of a 1991 research project showed that when fathers have similar levels of responsibility to mothers for young children, their approach to the tasks entailed is little different. This finding is reinforced by a 1995 report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which found that where the parenting styles of the sexes are different, this is often more the consequence of the respective parents' circumstances than of innate male or female characteristics.

If you don't believe the academics, ask any man whose life has changed in ways that have obliged him to break with gender conventions about childcare. Ask me if, *you like. Six years ago, when I* embarked on what turned out to be an 18-month period of solo responsibility for my three eldest children, I became a different sort of father from the one I'd been before. Sheer necessity required me to become a "mother" as well, not only executing far more domestic chores but developing a much fuller repertoire of parenting skills to include the ones conventionally thought of as female. More than anything this meant learning how to listen to my children and to talk to them more. I sang to them as well, especially to *the two boys* — remarkably, neither seems permanently damaged by the ordeal.

It is often assumed that both the *theory and the practice of blurring* distinctions between motherhood and fatherhood are exclusive to nice, middle-class New Men in their thirties — a new breed of male whose partners have full-time jobs and may, like me, work from home and enjoy the privilege of both a good income and flexible hours.

This does not appear to be the case. For example, the aspiration to "be there" for their children in ways their own fathers weren't there for them was strongly held by a group of young, working-class "absent" fathers in the north-east of England studied by researchers at Newcastle University. Similarly, grass-roots projects such as the Norfolk Young Fathers' Group, based in Norwich, have shown that when young dads are given the right guidance and information about supporting the children they may never have intended to have, they often turn out to be far from irresponsible or feckless.

Despite such social shifts, *though, the perception that men* cannot be depended on to be even reasonably committed fathers, let alone dedicated, multi-skilled ones, is resilient. Some of the strongest supporting evidence emerges in relation to divorce and separation. One, much-quoted, survey found that over 40 per cent of divorced fathers lost all contact with their children after five years. Yet the stories behind the so-called "40 per cent rule" — which other, similar studies have not replicated — can be complex and reveal that conventional wisdoms about women's superiority as parents may disable men as well as give them licence to roam.

Judge Cazalet made his remark while upholding the decision of a lower court in Cambridgeshire to allow a two-year-old boy to continue living with his father. Such judgments remain rare, with the overwhelming majority of residence proceedings settled in favour of the mother. The arguments about why *this is so centre on fun*damental beliefs about women's and men's respective aptitudes for nurturing, yet they typically generate *more heat than light.*

For oppositional and often reactionary fathers' rights groups such as Families Need Fathers, women win out in the courts thanks to an unholy alliance between conservative judges who think mother always knows best, and man-hating feminists in the social work system who think the same thing for different reasons. Yet a woman barrister of my acquaintance who specialises in family law says that in her experience most divorcing fathers don't want anything more than alternate weekend contact with their children.

Why would this be so? Is it simply because men will always prefer to be free of the most binding ties to children? Is it because divorcing men simply give up, putting their fates as parents in the hands of a legal system that is deeply biased against them? Or is it because the reform of fathers still has a long way to go — a factor which surely *contributes to family breakdown* in the first place?

The answer to the last question is surely a resounding "yes". Many men have changed the way they go about being fathers, and many more say they would do the same if their circumstances allowed. The challenge for men and for society is to ensure that progress continues so that everyone can say Judge Cazalet got it right.

